PARTISAN REVIEW

PR

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1942

WILLIAM TROY
Stendhal: In Quest of Henri Beyle

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●

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PARTISAN REVIEW

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A Statement by the Editors

The country is now actually at war. PARTISAN REVIEW, while primarily a cultural magazine, has always been concerned with politics. A question, therefore, as to our future editorial policy naturally arises.

For some time, as recent issues of the magazine have made clear, the editors have disagreed on major political questions. The complexity of the world situation, indeed, is reflected in the fact that no two editors hold the same position on all major issues. The actual outbreak of hostilities has not altered this line-up. It is clear, therefore, that PARTISAN REVIEW can have no editorial line on the war. Its editors will continue to express themselves on the issue as individuals.

We believe that a magazine like PARTISAN REVIEW cannot undertake to present the kind of programmatic guidance one expects of a political party. Our main task now is to preserve cultural values against all types of pressure and coercion. Obviously we cannot even speak of the survival of democratic civilization apart from the survival of our entire cultural tradition. This includes the fullest freedom of expression on political matters. All of us can at least agree on this: that in times like these it is a necessity, not a luxury, for PARTISAN REVIEW to continue to give space to radical—in the literal sense of "going to the roots"—analysis of social issues and the war. No intelligent decisions can be made without a full consideration of alternatives.

CLEMENT GREENBERG

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Stendhal: In Quest of Henri Beyle

William Troy

Whoever is gifted with alert and daring senses, curious to the point of cynicism, logical almost from disgust, a solver of enigmas, friend of the sphinx like every well-born European—he will be compelled to go after him.—FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

ON A FINE MORNING in October, 1832, on the Janiculum at Rome, there might have been observed a pudgy middle-aged Frenchman expensively attired in tight-fitting white trousers of an English material. (The latter are important because later to be concealed in their cuff was the sentence, written in English and jumbled "so that it should not be understood," *Imgo ingt obefif ty.*) Who was this personage and of what was he thinking among so many interesting reminders of the human past? The first of these questions is by no means easy to answer. According to one estimate the number of his pseudonyms was one hundred and sixty, and his disguises, which included those of a Cistercian monk and a woman of quality, were more than thirty. It is a mere accident of literary history that of the many names attached to his published writings one in particular should be associated with his reputation. Less accidental perhaps, but of some significance, is the fact that he should be remembered only as a writer; for he was in his time a lieutenant of Dragoons, a grocer, a commissar in Napoleon's army, a suspected police spy, a consul, and through all the self-styled Lovelace of his age. In the arts his interest included music and painting as well as literature—with a passion for *opera bouffe* perhaps lending a certain unity; and his works represent not only all the known genres but also some that cannot be too easily placed. Indeed, the difficulty of "placing" the figure on the hilltop is no greater for us than it seems to have been for Henri Beyle himself—to use the convention of labelling an individual by his baptismal name. The moment is memorable because for some unexplained reason—the blended influence of autumn sunlight and Roman ruins

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and the prospect of his fiftieth birthday?—it determined him to write his autobiography. "I shall soon be fifty," he writes in *The Journal of Henri Brulard*, "it is high time that I got to know myself. What I have been, what I am, I should really find it hard to say." This autobiography would be composed "without lying . . . but with pleasure, like a letter to a friend," for its purpose was to be no less than to discover "*what manner of man I have been.*" As to his hero Lucien Leuwen, the occasion had finally come for the secret and heart-rending interrogation, "Who am I?"

Like Beyle himself, nearly all the good critics in his own language have focussed his problem quite squarely, and rightly so, on the metaphysical problem of identity. To the excellent studies of Fernandez, Valéry, and Seillière there is perhaps not a great deal to be added along this line. But today we are so much impressed by the manner in which metaphysical are bound up with psychological considerations and both with the general cultural situation that the time is appropriate for the sort of comprehensive stocktaking that Beyle himself seems to have had in mind. For example, a little further on in *Henri Brulard*, the memory projects the following very interesting little *spontanée:*

> It was two months ago . . . while I was musing upon writing these memoirs . . . that I wrote in the dust, like Zadig, these initials:
>
> a d i l ine pg de r
> V. A. A. M. M. A. A. A. M. C. G. A.
> 1 2 3 4 5 6

The initials turn out to be those of the various women that he has loved in the course of his life. What the whole incident reveals is some sort of mysterious identification in Beyle's mind between the impulse to discover the truth about himself and the delight in setting down this cryptogram of his amours. It illustrates the manner in which everything in his life and work—his writings, his theoretical speculations, his political attitudes—takes on a complex and imponderable character. More particularly, it provides us with the clue that somehow involved in his case is some disturbance or at least malaise of the emotions. And for such a condition it is pretty inevitable for us nowadays to look for an explanation in the genetic history of the individual.

Behind the boldest and most annihilating protestations of the *Moi* in Stendhal (to distinguish now between the man and the

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writer) there is indeed always the recollection of those long, abandoned hours—with his Rousseau, his memoirs of Napoleon, and his caged thrush—in the dank little room on the Place Grenette in Grenoble. Not less at work are the remembered buffetings of the temperament that was so formed in its collision with a society that was to undergo three revolutions in forty years. For a proper understanding of the man in the white trousers we are compelled, therefore, to put his public utterances in their right place, which is a relative one, and consider them both in relation to the personality from which they emerge and the society to which they were one kind of reaction. Perhaps through such an effort the celebrated enigma of Stendhal will prove less mysterious if not less remarkable.

The childhood of Stendhal is a Freudian classic even for the *grand siècle* of the Oedipus-complex. "My mother, Madame Henriette Gagnon, was a charming woman, and I was in love with her," he announces in *Henri Brulard*. And, lest there be any doubt in the matter, he continues, "I wanted to cover my mother with kisses, and for her to have no clothes on. She loved me passionately and often kissed me; I returned her kisses with such ardor that she was often obliged to go away. I abhorred my father when he came and interrupted our kisses." But this is perhaps more than enough—except to note that hatred of the father prevents him from referring to his mother except by her maiden name. It is demonstrated by any number of gloating recollections of infantile sadism. When his tame thrush disappears, for example, he insinuates that his father has killed it out of spite, and the latter, hurt at the suspicion, alludes to it one day in roundabout terms. "I was sublime; I blushed up to the roots of my hair, but I did not open my lips. He pressed me for an answer, the same silence met him; but my eyes, which were very expressive at that age, must have spoken for me." Thus was he avenged against the "tyrant," and for more than a month was proud of his vengeance—a laudable trait, we are told, in a child. Here we see, among other things, the beginning of that talent for *mystification*—a talent that he shared with his contemporaries Poe and Baudelaire—which he was later to put to such a variety of uses. And in another quarrel with his father, a bour-

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geois with vague Royalist leanings, we have what is perhaps the key to his whole attitude toward any kind of authority. Instead of sympathizing with his father, who is on a list of suspects during the Revolution, he ponders, "My father glories in execrating 'the new order of things' (a term then fashionable among the aristocrats); what right have they to get angry?" This indignation not so much at injustice as at lack of logic, indicated by the peculiar emphasis on the word *right,* was to lead Stendhal to the rejection of much besides paternal authority. It had already led to a complete and final rejection of religion. At his mother's early death his main feeling is one of astonishment—perhaps that such a thing could happen to him. "I began to speak evil of God," he says simply. It was not "right" that the warm circle of his mother's affection should be intruded upon by the stupid fact of death.

But it is wholly unnecessary to prod further into what is the open scandal of *Henri Brulard* and the *Souvenirs of Egotism.* It will be enough to point to the more objective consequences. Turning to his first attempt at narrative, the tenuous but rather charming and too little read *Armance,* we find that the hero is a sensitive and gifted young aristocrat—the precursor of Villiers' Axel, Huysmans' Des Esseintes, and the early Proustian characters—suffering from a malady whose precise source is clear neither to himself nor the reader. Octave's "sole pleasure consists in living isolated and with nobody in the world having the right to address him a word." Exception is made for his mother—the only person in the world that he can love. Despite his avowed detestation of society he is persuaded to put in an appearance at certain of the great houses of the Faubourg, and in time becomes gradually involved in a curious sort of intimacy with a young woman of his own class. To call this a love-affair is inaccurate; it is one of the vaguest relationships in all fiction. The girl is hardly more than a substitute for the mother as an audience for the hero's endless self-revelations and articulated *horror vitae.* Finally he admits to her that he cannot love either her or anyone else—because of a terrible secret that sets him apart from all living men. This secret turns out to be that he is a man altogether "without conscience." What is of course puzzling is the complete lack of any overt wickedness in his behavior and the reader is left wondering as to the particular nature of his crime. Yet other characters hint at sinister elements in his

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personality. His mother remarks, "This singular taste [for solitude] is the effect of your disturbing passion for the sciences; your studies make me tremble; you will end like Goethe's Faust." What is soon evident, however, is that Stendhal is having supreme difficulty writing a novel about a young man motivated by "the obligation not to love." There is nothing to do but have him hurl himself into the sea and send the girl to a convent.

Armance is a slight work, with neither the scope nor insights of the later novels, but its very simplicity throws into relief what was to be their remarkably uniform pattern. All of them are about superior young men who hover about the great bonfire of love without ever wishing to approach near enough to get burned. All of them are built on an essential pattern of frustration. In every case the hero, like Fabrizio in the *Charterhouse of Parma,* although "in love with love," is blocked by some overwhelming obstacle either in himself or in external circumstances. To establish this obstacle Stendhal at times is reduced to far-fetched and improbable dodges. In *Lucien Leuwen,* for example, the hero, after trying through several hundred pages to make up his mind, is saved by the false information that the very virtuous heroine is having a child by another man. This relieves Lucien of the necessity of declaring his love but it prevents Stendhal from finishing the book. The relationship between Fabrizio and his aunt Madame de Sanseverina in the *Charterhouse* is kept pure through an implied antipathy for incest. That there may have been other reasons, however, is suggested in certain passages. "I was in love with love," Fabrizio tells the Duchess. "I have done everything in the world to acquire knowledge of it; but it appears that nature has refused me a heart to love, and to be melancholy." And perhaps nowhere is the dread of taking on the responsibilities of physical love better symbolized than in the closing scenes of the same work, in which Fabrizio carries on a liaison with the jailkeeper's daughter behind the bars of his cell by means of a sign-language. During this period he is at last completely happy; and when Sanseverina and the others plot for his escape he announces that he prefers to remain in jail. Here the iron bars of a cell provide an "obstacle" as irrefutable as it is concrete.

But it is of course in *The Red and the Black* that we find the most elaborate as well as most comprehensive treatment of the

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love-theme in Stendhal. And here the first of the two obstacles in the way of the hero is one that loomed quite large at times for Beyle himself—poverty. To consider Julien's relations with the two women in the novel without taking account of his origins is to miss much that explains their peculiar character and development. Julien, alone of these agitated young men, is of lowly birth —the son of a carpenter who knocks him about brutally and sells him to the local representative of the rising *haute bourgeoisie,* M. de Renal. Apparently he has also been knocked about by his many older brothers, and has never known the protection of maternal love. At the moment that we meet him he is steeped in Napoleon's memoirs and Rousseau's *Confessions.* And the physical description is revealing enough to be quoted in full:

> His cheeks were flushed, his eyes downcast. He was a slim youth of eighteen or nineteen, weak in appearance, with irregular but delicate features and an aquiline nose. His large dark eyes, which, in moments of calm, suggested a reflective, fiery spirit, were animated at this instant with an expression of the most ferocious hatred. Hair of a dark chestnut, growing very low, gave him a narrow brow, and in moments of anger a wicked air. Among the innumerable varieties of the human countenance, there is perhaps none that is more strikingly characteristic. A slim and shapely figure betokened suppleness rather than strength. In his childhood, his extremely pensive air and marked pallor had given his father the idea that he would not live, or would live only to be a burden upon his family. An object of contempt to the rest of the household, he hated his brothers and father; in the games on Sunday, on the public square, he was invariably beaten.

Of what this countenance is actually characteristic Stendal does not mention; but it is easy to detect in it the compounded lineaments of the Man of Feeling—the "delicate features," the "marked pallor," and the "pensive air"—and the Satanic hero—the fiery dark eyes, the wicked dark hair, and even the aquiline nose. By 1830 the process of assimilation between them had been completed; and in Julien we can see unmistakably how the hypertrophied sensibility of the former merges into the neo-Machiavellian diabolism of the latter.

In the de Renal household Julien is motivated neither by a thirst for experience nor by simple material ambition but by what may be called a sense of duty. The briskly conceived campaign

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by which he seduces Madame de Renal is an affair not so much of the heart as of the will. It is his "duty" to make love to this virtuous and naive woman in order to prove to himself that he is the equal of the class to which she belongs. "It would be cowardly on my part not to carry out an action which may be of use to me, and diminish the scorn which this fine lady probably feels for a poor workman, only just taken from the sawbench." And again, "The ruthless warfare which his sense of duty was waging with his natural timidity was too exhausting for him to be in a condition to observe anything outside himself." This condition is not relieved until the first great climactic scene, in which Madame de Renal permits him to hold her hand. "His heart was flooded with joy, not because he loved Madame de Renal, but because a fearful torment was now at an end." The next morning he is filled with joy that "*He had done his duty, and a heroic duty.*"

Duty toward what or toward whom? Fortunately, Stendhal provides an explanation: "Instead of paying attention to the transports that he excited, and to the remorse that increased their vivacity, the idea of *duty* was continually before his eyes. He feared a terrible remorse, and undying ridicule, should he depart from the ideal plan that he had set himself to follow. In a word, what made Julien a superior being was precisely what prevented him from enjoying the happiness that sprang up at his feet." Discussion of this "ideal plan" belongs to a later section of this paper. But it must now be pointed out that realization of his duty is for Julien never more than a momentary source of self-satisfaction. The primary struggle is not with Madame de Renal or with society but in himself, between the unacknowledged promptings of the heart and the dictates of the intellectual will. His confusion is betrayed in the paradoxical antithesis: "I ought to be stirred by her beauty; I owe it to myself to be her lover." The whole pathos of his situation is summed up in Stendal's comment on the incident of the hand-holding: "The idea of a duty to be performed, and of making himself ridiculous, or rather being left with a sense of inferiority if he did not succeed in performing it, at once took all the pleasure from his heart."

What constitutes the source of Julien's ordeal may be more apparent if one recalls what has been said of Henri Beyle's childhood. It is not without significance that to Julien Madame de

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Renal is many years older than himself—and a mother. The encounters between them are unlike those of adult lovers: Madame de Renal is too shocked by the impact on her innocent nature of her first experience of real love to maintain any strong sense of reality; and Julien is too dominated by his will to recognize the extent and quality of his attraction toward her. It is very nearly as "pure" a relationship as that between Fabrizio and the Sanseverina; descriptions of the physical side are suspiciously vague and uncircumstantial. For the most part Julien behaves like a spoiled child engaged in an intrigue with his mother. Only at rare moments of collapse, such as the one in which he is rebuked for breaking into Madame de Renal's bedroom at night, is the real basis of his trouble, the *natural* Julien revealed:

> "Wretch!" she cried. There was some confusion. Julien forgot his futile plans and returned to his own natural character. Not to please so charming a woman seemed to him the greatest disaster possible. His only answer to her reproaches was to fling himself at her feet, clasping her round the knees. As she spoke to him with extreme harshness, he burst into tears.

Different in kind and development, however, is the relationship with Mathilde de la Mole. Like the heroine of the fragmentary *Lamiel*, this character is a feminine counterpart for the desperate and amoral heroes. To Julien the obstacle that she presents is of course that of social rank; she is at the very top of that ladder that he must ascend to guarantee his victory. From her standpoint she is fascinated by the idea that there is something "daring and audacious" in loving one so far beneath her. If Julien had been merely another suitor of her own class, the affair would lack that element which characterizes great passion: "the immensity of the difficulties to be overcome and the dark uncertainty of the issue." At times she is the transparent little sadist: "She had infinite cleverness, and this cleverness triumphed in the art of torturing the self-esteem of others and inflicting cruel wounds upon them." The meeting of these two can only be sterile and mutually destructive; it has the character of moral or spiritual incest—a merging of identities in the flux. As incapable of love as her husband, she seeks to escape the ennui of her class and her position by a kind of perpetual titillation of the soul. At the top of one of the chapters Stendhal quotes from some forgotten book of memoirs: "*The need of anxiety*, such was the character of the beautiful

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Marguerite de Valois. . . . The need of playing at a game formed the whole secret of the character of this amiable princess." And in nothing more than in this "need for anxiety" and "need of playing a game" does Mathilde resemble her lover and husband. What helps us explain these traits in him should serve also to explain them in her.

It is not too much to say that *The Red and the Black* is the first full-length treatment of the "split-personality" in nineteenth-century literature. Of course this had been the secret basis of all the troubles of the heroes of the Gothic novel and of Byron; it was also being allegorically rendered in Hoffman's *Elixire des Teufels* and *Doppelgänger* as well as in Poe's *William Wilson*. In Julien's case, however, the situation is presented almost as a problem or a demonstration (Beyle had had an early passion for mathematics): What would happen if someone really attempted to separate the intellectual will from the impulses of the simple heart? Stendhal, a kind of naturalist of the heart, puts his hero through the paces like a scientist his guinea pig through a maze. Actually, the analogy is as unsound as it is trite; for the paces happen to be the still incompletely unravelled interplay of human thought and feeling and the maze is the whole organic complex of human relationships. Nor is the observer nearly so detached as he pretends. But Stendhal brings to the problem the kind of patient and exhaustive analysis of its elements that we like to think of as modern; through his influence on Nietzsche and possibly also on von Hartmann he may be considered as one of those responsible for the modern movement of psychoanalysis. In Julien what was to be the predicament of nearly all the major heroes of later nineteenth-century literature—those of Dostoievski, Melville, Proust and Kafka—is forecast with the bareness of a penny horoscope.

We say everything perhaps when we state the cause of this predicament as a dislocation for the individual of his normal or traditional objects of love. But this is to be quite general, to be confronted immediately with the unlimited range of possible operations open to the human organism. Before attempting to describe further what seems to be happening in the typical Stendhalian hero, therefore, it will be necessary to do what in the case of a writer of more complete or self-sustaining works would be less legitimate—to turn back again for a moment to the life. For

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Stendhal must be classed with an important type of modern writer in whom the life and the work are so mutually indispensable that the latter does not yield up its real interest or significance when taken alone. Together they constitute what may be called a phenomenon—not only within literature but within their culture as a whole. Certainly Poe, Rimbaud, Nietzsche, and even Melville are more interesting when considered in this way rather than in relation solely to their incomplete and variously confused productions. Less obviously apocalyptical in style than any of these perhaps, Stendhal's writing has the same quality of being the casual outpouring of someone who is essentially more the prophet than the artist.

In a preface to the perplexing and inconclusive *Armance*, André Gide, who has an excellent nose in such matters, advances the theory that the only possible meaning to be extracted from the book is that the hero is impotent. Gide proceeds to suggest that it is a study in the superiority of spiritual love over physical—impotence having a merely symbolical value. Even if this is true for this particular work we cannot help being tempted to apply the clue to the other Stendhal novels. In going over the roll-call we have seen that at least two of his heroes, Octave and Lucien, appear to have gone to their graves in a virginal state. Fabrizio admits equivocally to not having been born to know "the taste of love," and we have noted the rather suspect quality of Julien's passion for the two women in his life. (In fact, he finally says of Mathilde, "She is my wife, but she is not my mistress.") Moreover, the notion that Octave's "lack of conscience" was a euphemism for another kind of lack cannot but direct us to certain avowals of the author of *Armance* himself. In that same scene in his autobiography in which he writes the initials in the dust, he adds, "The fact is that I have possessed only six of the women whom I have loved." And later, "With all of these, and with several others, I have always been a child." Recalling his early years in Milan, he complains, "Nobody took pity on me or aided me with some charitable advice. I therefore spent the two or three years in which my temperament was most active *womanless*." (The italics are his own.) Moreover, from an obscene remark in a letter to Merimée there is evidence to be drawn that his much recollected life in Marseilles with the little actress Melanie Louasan was of the more

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innocent sort. This is also one interpretation to be placed on a passage in a letter written by her after his abandonment of her—in any case, one of the most pathetic documents in literary biography:

> I assure you again of my loyal devotion and genuine tenderness; I have already given you sufficient proofs of both, and you have replied only with vague letters, saying that you love me, that you still love me, and that I will realize it two weeks from now when I see you again. All of that means only that when we meet you will make love to me a great deal, and swear you adore me, and that you live again now that you are with me, and all that sort of thing. That may seem like a great deal to you, but I am afraid it has very little real meaning to me, especially when I consider your conduct as a whole, and your character as a whole; it cannot prove to me that you love me as I wish you to and as I must be loved if I am ever to be happy and at peace. And that is why I beg you to be frank with me. . . .

Of course it cannot be proved definitely that Henri Beyle suffered from a real or psychopathic impotence. Nor is it to be supposed that even if such proof were available it would adequately explain everything in his life and work. But if the value of any hypothesis is to be tested by the number of things that it allows us to put together we have here an extremely fertile hypothesis. Not only does it suggest the reason for the obsessive repetition of the frustration-pattern in the novels and the peculiar opacity of his treatment of love but also his attitudes toward many other unrelated subjects. For the dislocation of the love-object, which here may now possibly be more closely defined as an enforced separation of sentiment from its appropriate object, is not a single aspect of an individual; it affects every aspect of his being.

Very generally, it determines what may be called the dominant personality-tone—in Stendhal's case, the sense of self-humiliation. Like Lucien Leuwen, who compels a beautiful and virtuous woman to fall in love with him simply because she has once seen him fall off a horse, his sole impulse is to *prove* himself to himself by some objective and incontrovertible gesture. But since this cannot be accomplished in any direct and sincere fashion he resorts to two extreme stratagems—deception and violence. It is clearly the first that explains the fondness for intrigue, masquerade and pseudonymity already indicated. And most of the characters have the same secretive cunning about them: Octave has his "terrible

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secret" from the world; Julien confides only in the mountains and the skies the extent of his Napoleonic campaign against society. But deception actually turns out to be self-deception, and, as we have seen, all of them come to a bad end. The Machiavellian will does not easily displace the wounded sensibility of which it is the inverted expression. But since it is through his celebration of the other mode of self-assertion, the mode of violence, that Stendhal has probably had his most concrete influence we must look at the manner in which this is represented in his work.

Violence in the crude sense finds its symbol in the familiar figure of the outlaw or criminal. Ferrante Palla, the nationalist revolutionary poet in the *Charterhouse*, is rendered with such *brio* as to emerge the only truly heroic character in that novel. At the end Julien succeeds in becoming what he has subconsciously desired to be all along—an enemy of society in deed as well as in thought. In the notes for *Lamiel* we are told that the hero was to be an arch-criminal named Valbayre, who would declare, "I am waging war on society, which is waging war on me." Symbolically enough, the heroine was to avenge his death by burning down the Palace of Justice, in the ashes of which her own bones were to be found. Even mild-tempered Fabrizio seems to be delighted when referred to as the "great culprit." Undoubtedly, there is a survival here of the Noble Brigand tradition of Schiller and Byron—a popular literary tradition. And Stendhal was among the first to introduce that nostalgic glorification of the exploits and misdeeds of the Italian city-princes of the Renaissance which was to be carried so far by Burckhardt. But what is important is the manner in which these outside influences are modified to suit the necessities of a particular sort of temperament at a particular moment of time.

The criminal-type is no longer the confused and sometimes philanthropically motivated rebel of the romantic period; he is more cerebral; he has taken on a Latin sharpness and lucidity of mind. There has also intervened the grand example of Napoleon—the criminal among the nations. He now knows that what he is against is not a class but the whole of society—even the *idea* of society. Of all the men at a ball, Mathilde de la Mole is interested only in a picturesque Spanish conspirator who is under sentence of death. "I can see nothing but a sentence of death that distinguishes a man," she remarks, "it is the only thing that cannot

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be bought." In such an epigram Stendhal says as much about the particular society of his time as Balzac in the whole of *César Birotteau* or *Lost Illusions*. But this disgust is ultimately translated into an intellectual contempt for the world in general. Of *Octave* it is remarked, "No suspicion of personal interest came to attack the purity of his diabolism." And we have already seen how Julien is equally "detached" toward all the social classes to which he is exposed—the peasant, the bourgeois, the clerical, and the aristocratic. There is nothing but the stripped ego against the world—the whole personality canalised in the intellectual will. At least this is the self-conscious ideal that these characters set before themselves; and action, instead of being the expression of some material or idealistic motive, becomes more and more an end in itself. Action, that is to say, is something spontaneous and essentially irrational—to use a word that Gide has made well-known, *gratuitous*. It has no meaning except as an objectification of the "pure will" of the doer.

But if the ideal of a Napoleon operating on society through other means than the sword dominates their minds, there lingers in the sensibility the still unquieted echoes of J. J. Rousseau. And, at the end, as a Freudian critic would put it, the assertions of the Super-ego are successfully drowned out by the protests of the Id. When Julien makes his attack on the life of his former mistress, it is not out of the assumed necessity of justifying himself by such an act—like Raskolnikov's murder of the two women in *Crime and Punishment*. It is far from being a "gratuitous" act. It is rather the act of an exasperated child—a means of relieving the too great tension created by the contradictory nature of his feelings toward her. Afterwards, just before his execution, he confesses, "And why be a hypocrite still, when I am cursing hypocrisy? It is not death, nor the cell, nor the damp air, it is the absence of Madame de Renal that is crushing me."

The consequences of this ordeal are strikingly reflected in the formal bankruptcy of the Stendhalian novel. Because his heroes are incapable of action in the classic sense Stendhal is forced to rely almost exclusively upon analysis. Of course one admits that the analytical is the modern habit of mind; *Hamlet*, as Monseignor Kolbe has pointed out, is fundamentally a play *about* analysis. But in Stendhal the analysis is a vast and endless im-

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provisation, without center and without limits—a medley of conflicting themes and motifs that can never be resolved because they are never really grasped. Distinctions, comparisons, and qualifications of the most tenuous sort must be made for every movement of the mind or sensibility. It would not be hard to discover in this *mania* for analysis a symptom of what we today call paranoia. In *Lucien Leuwen* at least it is carried to the point of absurdity if not of madness; and it is no wonder that the book is uncompleted. Indeed, of all Stendhal's novels only *Armance* may be considered complete, and that simply terminates with the unexplained suicide of the hero.

Yet even the briefest resumé of any one of them reveals that there *is* action—a kind of action. But this is neither the rapid and vigorous melodrama of Balzac nor the mechanical Punch-and-Judy show of Flaubert and the naturalists. Rather, the web of analysis is punctured at intervals by unprepared and frequently meaningless outbursts of ferocity—like the end of *The Red and the Black.* Because the conflict cannot be resolved it is elaborated and repeated; and there are lacking all those qualities of movement and design that we expect of the novel form. If we compare the work just mentioned with another on which it had a direct influence, *Crime and Punishment,* we see the difference between a work that renders only the *agon* and *pathos* of the hero, to use the terms of classical tragedy, and one that includes within it something like an *epiphany.* The value or feasibility of the latter in Dostoievski may be questioned; but, from the aesthetic point of view, it gives finality and completeness. Stendhal cannot be numbered among those few great novelists who were also artists; his works have been interesting for other things than their style and form. And to discuss these things is to turn from such action as we find in his novels to some of their theoretical aspects—to what is sometimes called his "philosophy."

For Stendhal had no philosophy of a systematic kind, nor were his major ideas and opinions even very original for his time. His metaphysic of the Will was a common heritage from German idealism; it is in Balzac and it will be a little later in Schopenhauer. (We know also that Stendhal read and was rather impressed

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by Fichte.) This famous Will was destined to take two directions in the later course of the century—according to whether emphasis was placed on the individual or the race. From Fichte, Gobineau, and Nietzsche was to come the cult of racism that has been translated into action in our own time. The cult of egoism, reaching its peak in the 'eighties, found its spokesman in Germany in the now forgotten Max Stirner and in France and elsewhere in Stendhal. Of a common philosophical origin, however, both are subject to the identical philosophical objections.

Beylism is indeed as good as any other label to cover the moral and intellectual anarchy of the undefined individualism of the modern world. For actually the romantic will, as we have seen it at work, is nothing but instinct parading as Machiavellian reason. The cult of the *Moi* becomes a cult of self-destruction the moment that the individual realizes the interdependence between the sense of his own being and society. The notion of an altogether free and irresponsible individuality becomes a metaphysical conundrum if one inquires how a human individual could exist without a social environment to which he may offer the resistance by which he can be measured and defined. And it may be shown that when the individual makes his instinct the sole measure not only of himself but also of the universe, like Stendhal and many other writers of his century, he runs the risk of becoming indistinguishable from the universe—which may provide certain satisfactions but certainly destroys the possibility of individuality. In fact, he achieves a state that is indistinguishable from the state of death.

The same objection is to be made to the implied ethics of the passage on Julien's "ideal plan" quoted earlier. According to this plan the individual would seem to project a sort of ideal version of himself—once again the Super-ego at work—by which he must be governed in all his judgments and actions. But we have seen that what creation of this ideal self involves is a drastic separation of will and feeling that results in a total disruption of the personality. What it amounts to is a particularly hazardous mode of self-hallucination. "I am isolated here in this cell," Julien tells himself, "but I have not *lived in isolation* on this earth; I had always the compelling idea of *duty*. The duty that I had laid down for myself, rightly or wrongly, was like the trunk of a strong tree against which I leaned during the storm; I tottered, I was shaken.

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After all, I was only a man. . . ." At the last Julien does seem to have learned that the individual man has never been able successfully to lift himself by his own bootstraps.

In the political realm Stendhal reveals the same confusion; to reduce to logic his innumerable utterances on the political events and ideas of his time is impossible. In childhood his sympathies were republican, and he was seized with an acute sensation of joy upon the execution of Louis XVI. But it is clear that this is but one more expression of the revolt against his father—like his anti-clericalism. Denunciation of the class that the Revolution actually pushed into power abounds everywhere in his writings—the treatment of the de Renals and the diatribes against "middle-class meanness." And of the people he has this to say, "I abhor the mob (that is, any contact with them) while at the same time, under the name of 'the people,' I have a passionate desire for their happiness." Nothing better states the contradiction between the snob who boasts of his liaisons with duchesses and the child who exults in the death of kings. In the novels, as we have seen, cynicism and abuse are distributed almost equally among all classes of society and all shades of political opinion. Stendhal is much interested in politics; *The Charterhouse* and *Lucien Leuwen* are novels with political backgrounds; but he was interested in politics as in life as in "a game of chess." The truth is that he could not remain faithful to any political party or even program for the reason that he was incapable of any kind of allegiance. The refusal to accept any responsibility in his relations with society is of a piece with his attitude toward his father and toward women. His politics, like his ethics, end up in a completely naive anarchy.

Certainly French society of the 'thirties and 'forties—with the old guard scheming to hold power even at the expense of selling France to the Prussians and the liberals barricaded behind their meretricious press—was not such as to elicit much faith in man as a social animal. And the Church, somewhat dazed by events, but also struggling for power, offered few securities of a moral or spiritual variety. But there were other possible modes of adjustment; Balzac, Baudelaire, and even Flaubert, each in his way and to a greater or less extent, achieved some sort of private solution in spite of the public chaos. What is noteworthy in Stendhal is the manner in which the private history and the public history are

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identified, in which the moody and recalcitrant child of the Place Grenette grows up into the avowed enemy of the whole social order. This is to say that he is to be explained neither by a glib invocation of the Oedipus-complex nor by a description of the now quite familiar socio-economic contradictions of bourgeois society. It is rather that the whole soil of Western European culture in his time was such as to bring to monstrous flowering those talents for confusion and self-destruction which his early experience enabled him to contribute to it. It was such as to give special scope—in his case, largely intellectual, although in the next century active as well—to the potentiality for pure evil that exists in the race in every time and place. And the reciprocal nature of the whole process should prove as much as anything to what extent even in the negative sense the individual is involuntarily tied up with his society and committed to its destiny. But to pursue the point further is really to return to the question raised at the beginning of this paper.

Who, in the last analysis, is the *person* that emerges from behind the slily constructed barrage of subterfuge and deceit that was the career of Henri Beyle? Or, at least we may ask, what *kind* of person? In attempting an answer we have depended much less on his own explicit statements about himself than on the monotonously consistent pattern underlying his life and work. This pattern we have seen as the hackneyed modern one of frustration—the brisk progress to death and destruction of some unusually gifted and equally handicapped individual. Even when it has not been too apparent on the surface of the works we have insinuated that the basis of this handicap was some secret sense of sexual inferiority. Also noted has been the process by which what was originally a rejection of the father-symbol is translated into a rejection of all existent religious and social symbols. And the whole operation has been seen as one made possible only by the particular situation of early nineteenth-century culture. But for a fuller identification of the type we must now consider him from the perspective of a much broader and also more traditional framework of human thought and values.

From the beginning one cannot but be struck by the sacrificial and even hieratic air that surrounds most of Stendhal's characters. "At times I find something superhuman about him,"

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Octave's own mother remarks. And his uncle exclaims, "I conclude that if you aren't the Messiah awaited by the Hebrews, you are Lucifer in person, returning to this world expressly to addle my brains." It is harder perhaps to detect it in Fabrizio, although he is if anything the *victim*—of his family, of the Milanese police, of Parma, and, most of all, of his own indefinite sensibility. He is, in any case, alloted an early death. Lucien Leuwen too is martyrized largely through his own incapacity to feel strongly enough to make a choice in any situation. But in *The Red and the Black* the note is sounded in the first description of Julien's treatment at the hands of his brothers: "The jealousy of these rough laborers had been so quickened by the sight of their brother's handsome black coat, and air of extreme gentility, as well as by the sincere contempt which he felt for them, that they had proceeded to thrash him, leaving him there unconscious and bleeding freely. Madame de Renal . . . saw Julien lying on the ground and thought him dead." There can be no doubt that what we witness here is the "superior being" at the mercy of the gross and uncomprehending social group—Joseph and the brethren. And what is the whole narrative up to the last explosion into febrile and pointless action, as has already been suggested, but the *pathos* of ritual and tragedy —the representation of the suffering that the hero brings upon himself through the excessive assertion of his will? As a modern, it is true, Julien's suffering comes before rather than after the action; it is the malady of the split will itself that constitutes the real suffering; and overt action is no more than a temporary and unsuccessful anodyne. Pathos on the physical plane is mutilation or dismemberment; and lest we think that Stendhal has limited himself only to moral and psychological dismemberment we need only recall the last scene of all, in which Mathilde places Julien's head upon a marble table and kisses it. "A great number of priests escorted the coffin and, unknown to all, alone in her draped carriage, she carried upon her knees the head of the man whom she had so dearly loved." Like Oedipus and Hippolytus, he will have a grotto erected in his honor and presumably become a local cult among the people.

How much of all this is deliberate in Stendhal and how much the unconscious symbolization of his own old and deep-seated sense

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of martyrdom is not the kind of question to be easily answered. It is significant, however, that for his finest and most enduring novel he should find his "objective correlative" (to use T. S. Eliot's phrase) in an account in the *Grenoble Gazette* of the guillotining of a handsome young man for a *crime passionel.* Entirely by chance life threw up for him what elsewhere his imagination failed to accomplish—a design that gave an illusion of unity to all the elements in his long internecine warfare with society. By his choice of symbols is Henri Beyle finally found out; and in identifying himself with the criminal who pays to society the debt which it does not deserve he becomes identifiable in our eyes as the familiar and immemorial scapegoat-hero. The romantic outlaw of the Gothic tradition is apotheosized into the sacred criminal. To such an extent does the aureole gather round Julien's head that the old Abbé is obliged to protest, "This Julien is a strange creature, his action is inexplicable. . . . Perhaps it will be possible to make a martyr out of him." And let there be no mistake about it: Julien himself, in his last agony of self-communion, accepts his fate with the pride and also the fullest consciousness of his role: "The accuser whom society sets at my heels has been made rich by a scandalous injustice. . . . I have committed a murderous assault, and I am rightly condemned, but, short of murder only, the Valenod who condemned me is a hundred times more injurious to society."

In the classic manner the Stendhalian hero rehearses in the cycle of his own rise and fall the pattern of his culture as a whole. He takes on himself the guilt that is the result, in individuals and societies alike, of the disequilibrium between the principle of conservation, expressed in the limitations set by tradition and the moral code, and the principle of expansion, expressed in the interests and motives of the will. As a prefiguration of what was to be the destiny of his culture, his career has perhaps more meaning and a more terrifying reality for us today than when it was recorded. Prophecy has become a *fait accompli.* Not only does it throw into boldest relief the most obsessive problem of our time, the problem of justice, but it also demonstrates to what extent that

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problem is ultimately dependent for its solution on the problem of love. And this is the problem of what is to become of the individual in a culture which, by reason of its structure and fundamental naivété in regard to the human individual and his needs, is incapable of providing him with adequate objects of transcendence. The lonely and somewhat grotesque figure of Henri Beyle gazing down upon the ruins of the Holy City is a symbol of a society without love,—a society which has so far forgotten the meaning and importance of love as to be doomed to pay the consequences.

Separation

All day I have been completely alone, and now the night
Descends, swathing in shadow and swaddling all,
And all but a smother and blur is bandaged from sight,
Blots and blotches of shadow clotting on ceiling and wall.

I lift the glass chimney and light the oil-lamp's wick,
The quick lick of the flame flickers, and shadows distend,
The elongations of fingers sprawl on the wall, and the tick
Of the tin clock in the silence and the tick of my pulse contend.

In this prolongation of solitude, I am estranged
Even from myself, in you; in your absence I dwindle apart
In a ghostly attenuation of feeling, till all my deranged
Consciousness aches in the void for the physical thud of your heart.

D. S. Savage

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On The Eve

Victor Serge

FROM THE PORTE DE LILAS the suburb of Pantin appeared to be covered with an immense blanket of suspicious-looking bluish fog rising towards Bellevue and Montmartre. The gasoline tanks at Rouen were said to be on fire. The neighborhood of the Gare du Nord was deserted and wan in the twilight, the shop-shutters down, people on the doorsteps listening to the throb of distant guns. Taxis roofed with mattresses rushed in all directions. The Boulevard Sébastopol was in complete darkness and deserted, but underneath it was the Réamur-Sébastopol subway station, with its human magma waiting in animal fear for bombs that did not come. There was a mob atmosphere around the Gare de Lyon: no more trains, no more room in them, no more room in the station. A providential taxi with a one-eyed driver took us over jammed roads under artillery fire through the forest of Fontainebleau. Helmeted men cried from the edge of the black road "For God's sake, lights out! There's an alarm!" But no one gave a damn.

We fled with a feeling of relief that verged at moments on light-heartedness. Everything one possessed had been reduced to a few bundles. The day before yesterday I had worried about not finding a note among my papers—Now my books, personal belongings, documents, all my work, everything, had been abandoned, yet without any real emotion. (It's true that as far as I was concerned this sort of thing was almost habitual.) We would go on feeling this relief, this light-heartedness, even when mixed with bitterness. A piece of old Europe was crumbling, something was happening that had to happen. We had been stifling in a blind-alley. For years, it seems to me, France—perhaps the entire West—had been possessed by the feeling that "It can't go on this way." None of it could go on, none of it. The frontiers, Danzig, all the varieties of fascism, the parliaments, the whole heap of iniquities and absurdities, all the rotten literature and journalism, the blinded working class. Not that we were defeatists. Not at all. Like the French people as a whole, the revolutionists would have fought

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the Nazis with all their might if it had been possible. But only a living society can be defended, and the decay of this one was already too far advanced. Nobody believed in anything any more, because nothing, objectively, was possible: no revolution could be made by a working class stuffed with fresh Camembert, good wine, and rhetoric, nor could a counter-revolution be made by a bourgeosie incapable of audacity or thought, and sick with fear since the sit-down strikes. Nor could we go on under a regime of emergency decrees, whether Daladier's or Paul Reynaud's. (I used to marvel at Daladier's funeral-parlor face in the news-reels. He always seemed to be repeating to himself, to the point of nausea, "No, this can't go on. . . .") Now it was all over, the bad tooth had been pulled.

Few people have as yet this new sense which modern man is painfully acquiring, the sense of history. Nevertheless, the people who fled with us along all the roads of France and in the last trains had to acknowledge in their stupor that "it had to happen." I suddenly recaptured the strongest and most heartening emotion of my childhood, the one, I feel, that will stay with me all my life: confidence. I grew up among exiled Russian revolutionists who kept photographs on their mantlepieces of men who had been hanged. All their talk was of prisons, of Siberia, of the next revolution. They had confidence, they knew that the revolution was coming, inexorably. Without big phrases, they taught me faith in man, and to await with certainty the necessary cataclysms. Travelling with us was a Spanish friend (between the two of us we could put together a pretty collection of overturned states) and getting up at dawn in open fields under a light luminous rain, we decided that this time the road had been half-cleared for the European revolution.

Meanwhile the collapse went on before our eyes, sweeping us along with it. It was our own collapse too. Yes, our own. Along with an empire and an army, the workers' organizations were collapsing, and what was more serious, even solidarity had gone. The farce of it all, the monstrous farce, swallowed the tragedy of a hundred thousand dead, Amiens half destroyed, some bridges desperately defended at the price of blood, columns of refugees sprinkled with bombs, children lost in the insane confusion of railroad stations, and more, much more. But the tragedy was left

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north of the Loire. Crossing the bridge at Nevers on foot, we noticed that it was "fortified" on its far side by two small square sandbags, very white, very new and very neat. Seated on them were some territorials smoking their pipes. This, precisely, was where the farce began. (Hadn't the officers in this country ever seen a fortified bridge?) It was like a ridiculous stage-set in a provincial theatre.

Down all the roads caravans of cars streamed towards the south. Entire general staffs with their secretaries and stenographers were escaping; with them, squadrons of planes, columns of new tanks, ambulances, etc., etc. Busses from Paris appeared suddenly on a curve of the road. The drivers—from the Gare de l'Est-Parc Montsouris run—explained that they were taking their families to the Pyrenees because their employers had told them, "Save the machines, but pay for the gas yourselves, understand?" "You can imagine how much they care about our families," the drivers added.

The store-keepers raised the price of coffee to us. One old proprietress, from behind her counter in a town shaken from one end to the other by waves of refugees, refused to sell me a piece of string because I wouldn't buy the whole ball. Some one cried at her, "Yes, save your junk for the Boches, old lady Grigou!" Everything was crashing, but little tradesmen intended to survive. Together with the fleeing army and all the fugitives from the north, those from Paris, Alsace, Belgium, Holland and many other places, we invaded charming little towns, devout and comfortable, each sleeping around its church and the mansion of the rent collector. People there lived in the warm obscurity of old houses, skimping on electricity, never buying a book, patiently as ever filling their little stocking, rounding out their little nest-eggs. "Please God," moaned the old women, "can you tell us what's happening? Do you understand anything about it?" And soldiers would answer in chorus, "We've been sold out, betrayed! By our officers who skipped off in a hurry with their tarts and by the general staff and by the Cagoulards, who wanted to get even with the Popular Front. It's as plain as day." It *was* as plain as day. In a single month the masses had received, without the slightest propaganda, a revolutionary education such as a Lenin would have dreamed of. There was nothing to do but let the seed germinate. A soldier told me of

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some grotesque incidents of the debacle; non-commissioned officers had been seen making off in autos "to save the regiment's flag." I asked him, "Suppose for a moment that the radio had announced that there was no longer any general staff, that all the officers had been removed, and had cried 'Soldiers, defend France yourselves, hold every bit of ground you can!'?" He answered, "Then it wouldn't have happened this way, oh no!" He was right. . . .

We had to find a refuge. Several had been offered or promised to us; it had been quite the fashion in Paris to hand out invitations: "If Panama gets too disagreeable, come to my place in the Dordogne or in the Gironde. You'll like our wine." But my companion was put out of the chateau of a rich anarchist, quite politely indeed, on a day of torrential and romantic rain that beat down on the slate towers, the river and the beautiful rocks the anarchist had once praised to us. At an isolated farm in the woods, a friend who had been a socialist journalist the day before yesterday, revealed himself as Lord of the Manor and begged us to leave immediately, even if we had to take his car—because *They* were coming! As we were about to go, this one-time socialist explained that he had been converted to collaboration with Hitler, and was now in favor of a strong military government. (Government, that is, by bankrupts.) One more possible asylum remained, which had been promised to us by *the* pacifist writer. It was a pretty little house, nesting among flowers, but its door was closed and well guarded. *The* writer had gone to the mountains to meditate. Policemen gathered us up and sent us on our way; they too were meditative. These experiences were not confined to my case alone, but were rather the rule. To the petty bourgeois of these rich provinces the refugees were something suspect, hostile. Refugees made prices go up, looted provisions, stole bicycles—and just think of it, there were Spaniards among them, regular bandits! We could have kissed a peasant woman who offered us coffee and shelter on a day of pouring rain. She was not rich, but she refused our forty sous. A great moral exhaustion was revealed by this concern for money and material comfort. It was another aspect of the defeat. In a more or less working-class town even the militant trade unionists had not the slightest idea of offering the hospitality of their sacred meeting hall. The socialist municipal government refused to house any

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Spaniards as refugees. To have been refugees twice was rather excessive, one had to admit.

I realized suddenly that we political refugees, we hunted revolutionists, were doubly, triply, beaten at the moment, for many of us were no longer "of us," having been defeated and demoralized in the depths of our souls. We had begun to fight among ourselves for a place on the last boat.

The extremity of our defeat was this *sauve qui peut.* The end of solidarity means the finish of socialism and the workers' movement. I remembered José Negre, one of the first secretaries of the C.N.T., whom I met at Barcelona in 1917. When I next saw him it was during the war. He was lying on a pallet in a little concentration camp in the Jura, half dead with hunger but still full of enthusiasm at the age of sixty. I got in touch with the Veterans of the CGT, the printers' union at Paris, and the paper *Proletarian Revolution;* I had some one speak to Jouhaux—who got out of it with some useless advice. After having obtained a contribution of 300 francs, I was relieved to learn that the old man had died. The failure of the French working class (it's hardly worth speaking of the "left-wing" intellectuals, who went from one failure to another, from the Moscow Trials to worm-eaten pacifism or Stalinized belligerency, etc., etc.) this failure lay in its complete passivity in the face of the White terror in Spain and in its desertion of the Spanish refugees. Repression, in its Freudian sense, played a great part here. We lived too comfortably, our holidays were too beautiful; half of the militants of the extreme left—the best of them—were functionaries. Nobody wanted to see these fugitives from hell or hear any talk of them; it would have bothered our consciences and spoiled our week-ends. There was a great conspiracy of proletarian cowardliness in regard to the concentration camps at Argélès and Saint-Cyrprien. A militant trade-unionist whom I respected (he was a functionary) cried from the platform of a convention, "Rather slavery than death!" It was a magnificent slogan—magnificent for the partial lucidity of its false reasoning and as a confession of degeneration. It was the finish of courage. For it is not death one accepts when one enters a struggle, but the risk of it—and there are slaveries indeed so much worse than death that they only lead the way to it and multiply suicides.

The little towns of the Midi slept in the sun as if nothing had

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happened: Beaucaire, Tarascon, Avignon, white towers above the Rhône. The science of earthquake-detection had not yet reached this far. Tartarin of Tarascon would begin to comprehend only when he got thinner. We arrived at Marseilles three weeks too late; every place on the "life boats" had been taken—by the first arrivals, naturally. And besides, in making up the lists of requests for visas, the old socialist emigrés seemed to have decided not to put down any of the militants of the extreme left whose mere names would have been compromising. Every one was escaping in families, each with his own party or his own group—which were no longer good for anything else except escaping. It was unlucky for any one outside a party or a group, for any one who took the liberty of *thinking for himself* about the great cause of socialism. I met old comrade-opponents whom I had once known in Moscow, Berlin, Vienna or Paris. They shook your hand, but kept to themselves the name of the American who was looking after their visas. That was only for themselves and their own people.

Marseilles, a city swarming and unconcerned, was nominally a Red town, but it was an artificial shade of red—a business of little deals that were not always quite on the level. The man in the street understood things rather well: "Nothing can be done as long as there's the occupation. Afterwards there'll be fun, but not for the *salauds*." None of the old workers' organizations in Marseilles took even the slightest interest in the foreign political refugees. If it had not been for the American relief committee, many of the latter, and many of the intellectuals too, would have had no other reasonable way out than to jump into the harbor from the top of the cable-ferry. . . . We sometimes told ourselves that if 5% of these exhausted, defeated people managed to regain their will to fight on the other side of the Atlantic it would be wonderful. Those who bore the most scars were standing up best: young workers or semi-intellectuals who had been through concentration camps, prisons, splits in little parties, and the ordeal of Spain. They were difficult to rescue because the big conformist political parties felt no sympathy whatever for them, because the governments of the Western hemisphere were afraid of them as subversive characters, because most of them were obscure, without names as "intellectuals" or scholars, and because the threat of the concentration camp dogged their heels continually. (I know of several courageous

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persons who fought hard to save some of them; I should like to put on record here our deep gratitude.)

There were some Italian friends whose morale was fine: a tall straightforward old man of reformist opinions, a young and adventurous Trotskyite, and an old and temperamental Garibaldian. It seemed that in their corner of the world they could clearly hear the framework of the whole edifice cracking. They explained that the moment had arrived when even those who were profiting by the fascist regime had become aware that their only hope of salvation lay in a readiness to sell out.

There followed round-ups, petty arrests, denunciations, short imprisonments aboard a boat during holidays, messages from concentration camps, helpful letters from America. We lived on tenterhooks. The news came of Trotsky's assassination in Mexico; the darkest hour in the history of the working class was a fitting time for the Old Man to have departed—he who in its days of hope had risen so high. There was news of the suicide or murder of Walter Krivitsky in Washington, and of the disappearance of Hilferding and Breitscheid from among ourselves. There were suicides all around. . . . Despite all this I worked on a novel, though not for any love of "literature." André Breton read aloud to us, admirably, poems which he wrote in a green-house under a November sun. We named the dilapidated chateau in which we were living: "Espervisa." Others, who had become professional life-savers and were swamped by their task, worked desperately. But the shipwreck was too great. Only a few of those in danger got away.

Suddenly we found ourselves aboard a freighter moored at Pier 7. It was fixed up strangely like a floating concentration camp. I took my leave without joy; if it had been possible I would have a thousand times rather stayed. How one clung to this Europe, with its Russians dying before firing squads, its Germans trampled underfoot, its crushed France. We were leaving only to return, only in order to carry on our work. In the open Atlantic, after passing the shores of the Sahara, we gathered together on the upper deck between the smokestack and the lifeboats. The stars pitched and rolled over our heads. We were forty comrades among three hundred. The other refugees were intent only on escaping, for the most part unpolitical, and a great many of them were reactionary. What could I, when it was my turn, have to say that was essential

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to these forty people gathered in the darkness between the sky and the sea? At least this:—

We have not been so badly beaten, we are only defeated in the immediate present. We have brought to the struggles of society a maximum of consciousness and a will that was much superior to our own strength. We have spoken in the name of the working classes, whose aspirations and needs we have tried to make clear. But they most often did not recognize them, could not understand us, could not wake up to themselves, because in the depths of their souls they were captives of the social machine. We all have behind us a great number of faults and errors; the progress of thought cannot be other than stumbling and vacillating. The first of these is intolerance towards our own comrades, a fault springing from that feeling of the possession of the truth which is at the bottom of all strong convictions, and which is right and necessary—for we do possess great truths—but which also tends to create inquisitors and sectarians. Our salvation lies in a tolerant intransigeance which recognizes in each other the right to error, that most human of rights, and each other's right to *think otherwise,* the only right that makes any sense of the word *liberty.* (I have thought and I have written this since 1920, when at Petrograd I saw the Russian Marxists—then the purest, the most intelligent and the most virile cohort of revolutionists history has as yet produced—striving mightily to extirpate the "errors" around them, and thus already creating inquisitors.) But this aside, we have been astonishingly right. We have seen clearly and put down what we saw in our insignificant little papers, while the statesmen were floundering about in a morass of disastrous imbecilities. We have foreseen and glimpsed the human solutions to the problems engendered by history in movement. And we have known how to win, which must never, never be forgotten. The Russians and Spaniards among us have known what it is to take the world in your hands, make railroads and factories go, defend bombarded cities, draw up plans of production, and treat deposed masters according to their deserts. We have seen the generals, the ministers, the financiers and the archbishops smile ingratiatingly and tremble before us. No predestination condemns us to be the victims of concentration camps —and as for the prison-torturers, we know quite well how people are put against a wall. Our experience will come in handy tomor-

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row. Events are on the march! Beaten, yes, but our hearts are light, our hearts victorious. We are on the eve of—*tomorrow.*

. . . Before our eyes the Western Hemisphere spread out its strange landscapes, the sunlight rippling over everything. . . . At Martinique we found one more concentration camp, a hot one, guarded by great black children and run by crooked police. We found out about the political economy of the Antilles. A few families, millionaires in sugar and rum, owned Martinique and kept it in a moderate slavery—which will last as long as it is allowed to last—perhaps for a rather long time, because the primitive peoples are a problem.—All of a sudden we found ourselves strangely free (liberty was unbelievable!) at Trujillo City in the Dominican Republic. It was a neat little capital, modestly lit, full of flags and agile young girls dressed in rose and neon blue, who had every conceivable variety of Eurafrican and Polynesian physiognomy. There were also comradely Spanish refugees, about whom we could only wonder how, and on what, they lived. . . .

I arrived at Havana during the battle for Leningrad. The beauty of Havana, its sensual joy, fed by electricity—what a relief after the blackened cities of Europe. Here I found unexpected friends. But I was haunted by the thought of Leningrad, by visual images of a place where I had lived more than ten years, splendid and grim years, but years that became darker and darker as we descended the slope, as they began to kill my friends. . . . I had arrived at Petrograd at the end of another voyage, across another age, in 1919, having been released from prison, and having left Barcelona in a state of insurrection to join a vaster insurrection. I travelled sixteen months, fourteen of them in prison, while the revolution rose towards its crest; Zinoviev welcomed me to a besieged, frozen and starving city that was in the process of winning a miraculous battle for the future. In 1933 I had to leave that city on the way from one prison to another; I was being secretly transferred to the G.P.U.'s inner prison at Moscow—because unremittingly and without fear, we had denounced the Thermidorians who were leading our revolution into the abyss. This abyss was not at all a metaphor; we are in it right now. And there will be no other salvation for Russia than in a revolutionary resurrection. This resurrection is almost certain, but how much will it cost?

. . . The airplane teaches us a new vision of the world, a lyrical

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grey vastness from which should rise a new poetry and a new painting. But our civilization reduces it all to a mechanism for killing. Only the well-to-do use it for travelling, their senses long dead to all excitement. They slept in the comfortable armchairs of the Douglas while we flew over the stormy landscape of Yucatan and spanned the high central plateau covered with heavy clouds transfused with light. . . . The first face I saw at the airport in Mexico City was that of a Spanish friend, an eye-glassed face, intense, energetic, lean. For eighteen months during the Spanish war we had struggled at Paris and elsewhere to save this man, one of the most clear-headed of all revolutionists, from a death which the Stalinists were stubbornly preparing for him in Mr. Negrin's prisons. Now he with other comrades had just fought for fourteen months to ensure my voyage and escape. Without them I would not have had a chance. It was my good fortune to have had the rational miracle of solidarity happen twice for me. The first time was five years ago, when I left the USSR for exile, stripped of everything—saved, on the eve of the mass executions, saved by the action of some French comrades. So it is that we stand together from one end of the world to the other, few in numbers, but sure of each other, and confident: on the eve, confident of tomorrow.

. . . In the streets of Mexico City the feeling of no longer being outside the law was extraordinary. No longer was I a hunted man on reprieve from an internment camp, nor that alien suspect whose papers the Haitian police had examined with a kind of horror. *Do you come from Europe? From France? Political refugees? No nationality? But Russians all the same?! And a French writer too?! With a Mexican travel-permit! Writer, painter? Is that why one of you takes notes and the other makes sketches?* The policemen would go into a fit, and regain their composure only just in time to smile politely at some Phalangist gentleman who was passing through with a passport in good order, prettily bound in blue paper and duly stamped by Franco's consuls.

I have gone through too much not to be able to live in the immediate moment only. But the hospitable lights of Mexico City still superimpose themselves on a background of far-off, ruined, uneasy cities, plunged in the black-out; and I see hunted men going through them, the most hunted men in all the world. I know that not all can or ought to leave, that the duty of those who can

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stay is to stay. (They too are doing their simple duty well, and they too are on the alert for tomorrow, one must not doubt that.) And I know that some of them will have to die—the law of averages requires that. But I also know that some of them cannot and ought not remain, otherwise they will perish inevitably and uselessly. And yet, although these are the most resolute and conspicuous enemies of nazi-fascism, your great American democracy closes its doors to them. High officials, wearing V's in their button-holes, have drawn up new regulations for visas that are virtually delivering some thousands of courageous workers into the hands of the Gestapo. I don't know just how this could happen, but it has. I can well understand that those officials have no sympathy for men who are after all subversives. But can't they realize that Europe is going to have urgent need of these men tomorrow? That if the cadres of old European socialism are not rescued, tomorrow's inevitable revolutions are going to be inspired and led by ex-Nazis, ex-Fascists, ex-Stalinists, by adventurers without ideas, without humanity, scruples or devotion? All that's necessary to see this is a simple political calculation. In the concentration camps of the Sahara and in the sad streets of Marseilles are men who must be saved if we are at all anxious to save certain values—for human values cannot exist without men to incarnate them. . . .

(*Translated by Jean Connolly*)

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Montrachet-Le-Jardin

Wallace Stevens

What more is there to love than I have loved?
And if there be nothing more, O bright, O bright,
The chick, the chidder-barn and grassy chives

And great moon, cricket-impresario,
And, hoy, the impopulous purple-plated past,
Hoy, hoy, the blue bulls kneeling down to rest.

Chome! clicks the clock, if there be nothing more.
But if, but if there be something more to love,
Something in now a senseless syllable,

A shadow in the mind, a flourisher
Of sounds resembling sounds, efflorisant,
Approaching the feelings or come down from them,

These other shadows, not in the mind, players
Of aphonies, tuned in from zero and
Beyond, futura's fuddle-fiddling lumps,

But if there be something more to love, amen,
Amen to the feelings about familiar things,
The blessed regal dropped in daggers' dew,

Amen to thought, our singular skeleton,
Salt-flicker, amen to our accustomed cell,
The moonlight in the cell, words on the wall.

To-night, night's undeciphered murmuring
Comes close to the prisoner's ear, becomes a throat
The hand can touch, neither green bronze nor marble,

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The hero's throat in which the words are spoken,
From which the chant comes close upon the ear,
Out of the hero's being, the deliverer

Delivering the prisoner by his words,
So that the skeleton in the moonlight sings,
Sings of an heroic world beyond the cell,

No, not believing, but to make the cell
A hero's world in which he is the hero.
Man must become the hero of his world.

The salty skeleton must dance because
He must, in the aroma of summer nights,
Licentious violet and lascive rose,

Midsummer love and softest silences,
Weather of night creatures, whistling all day, too,
And echoing rhetorics more than our own.

He hears the earliest poems of the world
In which man is the hero. He hears the words,
Before the speaker's youngest breath is taken:

Fear never the brute clouds nor winter-stop
And let the water-belly of ocean roar,
Nor feel the x malisons of other men,

Since in the hero-land to which we go,
A little nearer by each multitude,
To which we come as into bezeled plain,

The poison in the blood will have been purged,
An inner miracle and sun-sacrament,
One of the major miracles, that fall

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As apples fall, without astronomy,
One of the sacraments between two breaths,
Magical only for the change they make.

The skeleton said, It is a question of
The naked man, the naked man as last
And tallest hero and plus gaudiest vir.

Consider how the speechless, invisible gods
Ruled us before, from over Asia, by
Our merest apprehension of their will.

There must be mercy in Asia and divine
Shadows of scholars bent upon their books,
Divine orations from lean sacristans

Of the good, speaking of good in the voice of men.
All men can speak of it in the voice of gods.
But to speak simply of good is like to love,

To equate the root-man and the super-man,
The root-man swarming, tortured by his mass,
The super-man friseured, possessing and possessed.

A little while of Terra Paradise
I dreamed, of autumn rivers, silvas green,
Of sanctimonious mountains high in snow,

But in that dream a heavy difference
Kept waking and a mournful sense sought out,
In vain, life's season or death's element.

Bastard chateaux and smoky demoiselles,
No more. I can build towers of my own,
There to behold, there to proclaim, the grace

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And free requiting of responsive fact,
To project the naked man in a state of fact,
As acutest virtue and ascetic trove.

Item: The cocks crow and the birds cry and
The sun expands, like a repetition on
One string, an absolute, not varying

Toward an inaccessible, pure sound.
Item: The wind is never rounding o
And, imageless, it is itself the most,

Mouthing its constant smatter throughout space.
Item: The green fish pensive in green reeds
Is an absolute. Item: The cataracts

As facts fall like rejuvenating rain,
Fall down through nakedness to nakedness,
To the auroral creature musing in the mind.

Item: Breathe, breathe upon the centre of
The breath life's latest, thousand senses.
But let this one sense be the single main.

And yet what good were yesterday's devotions?
I affirm and then at midnight the great cat
Leaps quickly from the fireside and is gone.

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On The "Brooks-MacLeish Thesis"

Editors' Note: We asked some twenty writers to comment on Van Wyck Brooks' theory of modern literature, as discussed in Macdonald's "Kulturbolschewismus Is Here" in the last issue. We print below the replies received.

ALLEN TATE

With most of Mr. Macdonald's criticism of Van Wyck Brooks I fully agree; but at two points I believe that it is seriously at fault. Mr. Macdonald seems to feel that the great writers of our time were consciously exposing the evils of capitalism; yet I believe that the most we can say, if we are not going to succumb to special pleading, is that they have written out of a vision of life in our time, or out of a vision of the evils of life which are common to all times; and it is this tragic view which Mr. Brooks cannot understand, because he holds the moralistic and didactic view which can be extended, as he has extended it, into the nationalist and patriotic view. And this view can believe in the dignity of man only by sticking its head in the sand. It is a very old view, and there is nothing novel or abstruse, except in the tangled misconceptions of Mr. Brooks remarks on his contemporaries, in Mr. Brooks' revival of it. We may let him have Whittier if he wants him.

Yet the trouble is that Mr. Brooks and the "school" for which he stands are probably going to make us like Whittier too. Nobody who follows the drift of opinion in this country can fail to see the parallel between the Brooks-MacLeish school and Dr. Goebbels' Hitler-inspired attack on "modern" art. It is wholly irrelevant whether a nationalist-patriotic censorship of the imagination is set up in the interest of democracy or of totalitarianism; the results may turn out to be the same. The best defense of democracy, or of any other political order, in terms of the creative imagination, is no defense at all; and the worst defense of democracy, or of any other political order, in terms of the imagination, is the effort to prove that the arts prefer any one political system. Censorship and repression of the arts are possible under any system; they are not impossible under a democracy, particularly at that moment when democracy begins to change, as ours is now beginning to change into some kind of functional state.

As an old reader of Mr. Brooks' works, I cannot share Mr. Macdonald's surprise that Mr. Brooks has come round to his present views. He has always seen literature as chiefly a symptom, and if you see it that way you are going to prefer Whittier to Henry James because though tame and pious and limited Whittier is safe. I have also an uneasy suspicion of Mr. Macdonald's defense of the moderns: are they not a symptom too? After the triumph of Mr. Macdonald's socialism, will they not become unneces-

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sary, perhaps even decadent, and make way for the socialist Whittier? Meanwhile we had better keep an eye on Mr. Brooks. His large audience and his great powers of persuasion, most of all his facile assumption of the role of the defender of democracy, will bear close watching; it may already be too late to do anything about the influence of a man who joins these powers with a bourgeois preference for the inferior in literature: a preference which permits him to make even Tolstoy and Goethe sound second-rate, as if they were well within the reach of the whole American public. Perhaps it is this gross flattery implicit in Mr. Brooks' views which is the saddest sight of all.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

Dear Mack:

You were never more picturesque or correct in your indignation than when you voiced your astonishment, in "Kulturbolschewismus," at what Brooks had said in his now notorious pronunciamento. To me there was something too ludicrous in it to make me feel like taking it seriously. But you may be right, such things should be noticed, as when a locomotive goes off the track. I suppose someone has to clear the way again. I prefer to drive by.

The thing that impresses me most though about the affair is that anyone should be moved by it one way or the other. Isn't such an attitude as Brooks displayed just the very ordinary one of all bad writers and editors? What else have I been facing all my life? You can't expect me to give it a tumble now. The only interest, and that a mild one, is that the name of Brooks should be involved in it.

Men like Brooks ought to be digging around the young coming up, to see what they are made of. They ought to realize that, as creators, they themselves are wearing it pretty thin and that, logically enough, the new litter will probably have the yeast in it somewhere. Go out and discover that. Discover it and learn. But no, these potential dotards can't believe their eyes. They can't read anything unless it is in some old lingo they learned when they themselves were brats.

What the heck does Brooks think the boys are talking about these days in the poorly heated rooms? Does he think it is anything different from what he was thinking, at his best, when he was young? It's different, all right, because the age is different but in its essence it is just as "right" as his highest conceptions. The only difficulty is he has lost the power to recognize it.

Let him go to school again—to the young. He's stymied. And how many others of his ilk along with him. Only, I say, there's nothing particularly unusual or interesting about it. Just an ignorant sap, the world running away in new and brilliant colors under his nose and he is bewildered. It's too bad.

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JOHN CROWE RANSOM

There would be an irony if the writers whom Mr. Brooks has abused should find in PARTISAN REVIEW's invitation the occasion to form a chorus and—abuse Mr. Brooks. They would be supporting his charge that theirs is a coterie mentality.

There is a good deal of substance to Mr. Brooks's generalization as Mr. Macdonald reports it. He finds that the modern writers do not have the rating of 'primary" or "great" writers; and that is generally correct as I see it. Our literature with its brilliance is less creative and positive than other literatures have been.

Documenting that a little, I do not know how many of Mr. Brooks's academic strictures I shall be repeating, and it does not matter. Suppose we look at fiction. It is the literary mode in which production has been most prodigious, almost displacing the other modes, and that itself is significant; for fiction is the mode closest to non-literary prose, the one in which a writer can carry on most successfully without much creative imagination. So we get mass production of fiction that is in good form but without any power. We also get fiction that is tractarian and topical, writing out satire and case histories; and though this may achieve real power, it is power that is not literary but secular and practical. (The fiction that is openly Marxist or Social Revolutionist, for example; and, if the fiction is not that, the Marxist "criticism" which is prepared to show that it must be working then for the dread Bourgeoisie.) Then, as if not to serve in any man's army, there is the fiction so "pure" that it is richly detailed to the point of being without direction, and fantastic or obscure.

The poetry of our age is also brilliantly unsuccessful. The lyrical note is a tinkle without resonance, and we take no note of it, or else it employs its orchestration so wildly that it produces mystification. It is born in mystification. The artist has lost the approach to his art.

I should argue bitterly in defense of the greatness of a few moderns, such as James, Yeats, and Proust; though confessing that there is not one of them but bears witness to his age by the desperateness of his way of escaping the common frustration.

When Mr. Brooks blames the tendency of the literature upon the vanity of its writers, or their misanthropy, that seems to me as incredible as it is cynical. More likely it is due to a scruple of conscience, holding the writers sternly at home in their actual contemporary world and not permitting them to lapse back into the inadequate forms and immature affirmations of the last century. What Mr. Brooks should indict is not the writers but the age which bore them. That would be more heroic. They will not really evade their difficulties by denying them, and Mr. Brooks's idea of doing so is dogmatic, and in fact it is Christian Science.

What is the matter with the age? Something profound and still obscure. I cannot think the difficulties are social, or economic, or material, for these difficulties are perennial. It is true that we have plenty of trouble adjusting to an Age of Machines, but it hardly paralyses us. I find

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myself more and more imagining that the epochal thing that has happened to us is a sudden crisis of language and expression. For the first time in human history we have pure science, which is pure prose, and that means that we have pushed language to the point where it is the perfect instrument for science. The esthetic or imaginative elements of language that used to clutter it—the figures of speech for example—have been spotted and thrown out. The consequence is that literature, with its imaginative order of knowing, is homeless. It has to make up its own occasions, and it becomes factitious and technical in a degree that was never known before.

Something like this, I think, determines the difficulties of all sorts of creative writers, so that it now devolves upon criticism to study it in every sort of case. But poetry is the core, or the epitome, of all the creative forms, and in poetry the issue is found most simply. There are now many men of good will attempting in the name of criticism to analyse the logical or linguistic element in poetry, a study which is nothing at all if it is not intensive; believing that perhaps the obscure fate of literature itself may depend on the issue which they are trying to isolate. I do not know what is the precise fault which Mr. Brooks finds with my own studies, but I suppose it is because they take criticism partly in this light. I have been notified by writers who do not have this particular interest that it is tiresome. But it may be that literary studies must very soon develop by policies like those that have served science so well: by a series of close and small efforts rather than by some single great push. Science did not begin to flourish in the general before it learned how to succeed in the minute; but if indeed there is no such thing as science in general there is also no such thing as literature in general. Writers now are painfully self-conscious and bewildered. Perhaps they will have to stay with their self-consciousness, and discover if they can just what literature is calculated to do, before they will be freed again.

HENRY MILLER

Thanks for asking me to contribute to the controversy. I have just read the article. I think Macdonald disposes of the issue himself. What good is there in drawing it out? My impression was that Van Wyck Brooks was dead—years ago. I see now he's deader than dead. It's too damned silly to bother about. These people kill themselves off. As for MacLeish, I never read a line of his—that's significant too. If I'm going to fire a salvo, I'd like something better to aim at—that's how I feel, to be honest. And *Thomas Mann!*—it's all pitiful. I don't know any intelligent person who gives these matters a second thought.

LOUISE BOGAN

The first time I realized Van Wyck Brooks' deficiencies as a critic was when I consulted his book on Henry James, in the course of writing an article on *The Princess Casamassima.* I came upon his explanation of the character of Hyacinth Robinson and knew that it was wrong. It might

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have been wrong for two reasons: 1.) That Brooks did not understand in any way what it was that James was driving at 2.) That Brooks understood, but was warping the facts to fit his theory of James.

Since Brooks' metamorphosis into an official critic functioning on the behalf of an official literature, I have come to believe that both explanations fit his case. These explanations overlap and interact. Brooks does not deeply, wholly, intuitively understand what the artist is, or is trying to do; and Brooks, because of this deficiency can readily switch on and off the reasons of the artist to suit his arguments. Brooks is at bottom a moralist, looking for literature to back him up. He is a man seeking a religion desperately, who will catch at any straw to give him a sense of security. He is, as well, a person who has no idea what the aesthetic emotion is, or can be. For this last reason alone he can be forgiven a few of his worst blunders. He is not always telling lies. He simply, utterly and completely, does not understand.

This basic lack of understanding makes him the perfect propagandist, his conscience does not check him in his career because it sees nothing to check. This lack also accounts for the spotty character of his work: his reliance on *pastiche;* his fondness (which he shares with Mrs. Humphrey Ward) for Amiel; his abortive enthusiasms for both psycho-analysis and socialism. The early books, re-read in the light of modern insights, are uncommonly uneven and, often, childish. Brooks has always wanted "constructors" and "a focal center." He has always set up "the will" against "mysticism."

> "I know of no considerable artist whose work does not vividly represent some trait of the race it sprang from."
>
> "An American artist can have no sane originality *deeper than that of technique* (its. mine) which does not spring from American life."

This is Brooks speaking, in 1908. He is saying the same things now. He has found his center; and, finding it must, as the Philistine militant, denigrate all which does not fit into his ultimately moral pattern. "Few writers, I think, at present are *living up to these expectations.* What then, is literature *doing for us* in these perplexing times?"—It might be Samuel Smiles.

Perhaps it is dangerous and futile to compare the literary development of one century with another. The 19th century opened with dark psychic turmoil and romantic extravagance everywhere present in European literature. In France the *roman noir* held the field; and Hugo had triumphed over Vigny. Béranger was the most popular French poet; and there were bad nationalist political French painters to equal him. Out of this welter came quite different things. Baudelaire and Flaubert were both born in 1821. Madame Bovary and Les Fleurs du Mal were both published in 1857; and this was the year of Béranger's death. The Bourgeois revolution, in spite of 1848, had triumphed, but so had the beginning of modern consciousness, as expressed in the art of literature. Art, and its

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great power of enlightenment, truth-telling and release goes on, as someone has said, behind history's back. It cannot be manufactured to order. We do not need worry about its future in America. In ways and forms unforseen and unimaginable by Brooks and others, it will occur. Eliot, Stein and James are stages on the way.

JAMES T. FARRELL

Dwight Macdonald's article on Van Wyck Brooks was very good. I should like to add two points to it, and to offer some additional comment.

First, the "primary" writers of the past listed by Brooks were attacked in their own days for the very same reasons that Brooks cites in his castigations of modern writers. Dostoevsky was accused of nihilism. Whitman was treated almost as if he were an immoral scoundrel. Victor Hugo was driven into exile. The Philistines looked on Ibsen as if he were the devil. And Socrates was driven to his death for the "crime" of having demoralized the youth of Athens. Brooks is pirating the reputations of great writers of the past while he speaks the language of their bitterest enemies.

Second: While it is proper to defend the writers whom Brooks attacks so shamelessly, it must be pointed out that they do not all belong to the same tendency, and it does not mean that valid criticisms of many of them are not appropriate. The recent critical writings of T. S. Eliot, for instance, emphasize religious values. While it is impossible for Eliot to be as critically immature as Brooks, he is in many ways closer to him intellectually, than he is to Macdonald.

It was pertinent to mention the Moscow trials. We are not done with them politically, or in terms of their influence on cultural matters. As Trotsky pointed out, there is nothing new in their basic character: the amalgam is familiar in political and literary frameups. And we can now see a pattern that is unfolding. First, destroy the intellectual and artistic backgrounds of contemporary writers and thinkers: discredit them by attacking Marx and Joyce; then, ruin their artistic and intellectual reputations; finally, call in the cops and put them in the clink as subversive ideological Fifth Columnists.

Macdonald says that P.R. is fighting a rear-guard action. I think that since it was re-established on the new basis in 1937, it has done far less than it might have done. It has already lost many opportunities. Now, when the situation is rapidly worsening, it has to make up for these lost opportunities. Something better than the Zabel article, for instance, should have been printed on MacLeish. Zabel's politeness appeared almost like hedging. To him, MacLeish is inconsistent. But he did not seem to know what deductions to draw from the specific character of MacLeish's inconsistency.

Many lines of cultural life are now coalescing. Just as the government is becoming the main customer for the products of heavy industry, it is also becoming, more and more, a major employer of intellectuals, artists, and writers. (Parenthetically and apropos of the managerial revo-

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lution, it is clear that to date the only trust that the government had really been able to control is "the brain trust.") Because of the economic plight of writers, government institutions, political movements, and commerce provide many of them with the sole means of making a living. Thus, the New Deal, Hollywood, the Stalinist movement play such important roles in the cultural life of America. The result of this tendency has been restrictions on artistic production and on thought. Now, with the world crisis becoming more increasingly severe, an ideology to justify this process is in a state of formation. Even the sordid purchase and misuse of talent will be justified, not as an unpleasant necessity, but as something good, progressive, a means of furthering culture. Brooks, in *On Contemporary Literature*, declares that our "cynical" writers, imbued with a drive-toward-death, do not want to become public figures. And this notion also intrigues Lewis Mumford (who, along with Brooks, has succeeded in raising obscuranticism to a higher level). In *Faith for Living*, Mumford, too, says that writers should become public figures. The idea seems to be that we should all imitate Archibald MacLeish and Robert Sherwood.

Behind such manifestations, there is a simple historic fact: the bourgeosie cannot stand its own culture and its own past. In the 18th century, the writers found a common interest with the merchants. The latter wanted to be free of feudal restrictions in order to sell on a free market: the writer wanted to sell his works on a free market instead of being forced to depend on the patronage system. The significance of Samuel Johnson's famous letter to Lord Chesterfield is that it is a public document which date-lines and drives home the *coup de grace* of the patronage system. But now, a new patronage system is developing. In the heroic days of democracy, the bourgeoisie was pro-scientific and anti-clerical. Its sponsorship of science, and its struggle with the church helped to create the material and the cultural basis which permitted the great development of modern realistic literature. But by the middle of the nineteenth century, it became clear to more and more writers that bourgeois culture, which once promised so much to the artist, was beginning to crush him. This is the basis for the profound despair of men like Baudelaire, Flaubert, Rimbaud. In their way, they questioned the whole moral sensibility of their times—that is, of bourgeois culture. It is this profound despair which is the foundation for the personal aesthetics of Joyce's character, Stephen Daedalus. And *Finnegans Wake* is, in a sense, the final word of Joyce on the brutality of bourgeois culture. He turns his whole intellectual past into a grandiose and scholarly joke. To repeat, since roughly the middle of the nineteenth century, we have been witnessing a process whereby bourgeois culture is destroying its own artistic sons, and the artist has sought, in various ways, to find the means of preserving the integrity of his own being as an artist, and to combat this crushing weight. This is part of the significance of *l'art pour l'art.*

Brooks has made himself part of the process of destroying the artist. He has advanced it one more stage. *Ex-post-facto,* he justifies every Philis-

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tine who attacked Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Joyce. In fact, few Philistines of the past ever descended to a lower level than that of Van Wyck Brooks. For he has compared serious writers with Hitler and Mussolini—even with rattlesnakes. And then, in order to show that he is really tolerant, he assures us that some of his best friends are writers.

Brooks' recent fulminations parallel the current reaction against Marxism. Brooks' diatribe against dead geniuses is really a means of attacking living writers: Max Eastman's personal war against Karl Marx seems to be a means of achieving the same end. Such attacks cannot disturb the bones of dead men: they can only injure the living. And herein, we observe one of the traits which the Philistine shows in all ages.

Now, from all sides, the Philistines are coming together, and they wail for a *Weltanschauung*. They are disturbed because they do not see sufficient faith in their fellow men. Max Eastman declares that his contemporaries lack faith in democracy: Brooks states that modern writers have lost faith in "the idea of greatness." They are looking for some soul-saving hope which will no longer require them to meet problems patiently, with discipline, and with courage. They want a faith which will save them the onerous difficulties of thinking. I observe, for instance, that when Eastman criticizes dialectical materialism, he seems to be more disturbed because it seems to him to be a fighting faith, than he is because it is an inadequate statement of scientific method, and an unwarranted description of nature. What these men are really trying to do is to create a metaphysics of the war. But they do not pursue this task systematically, and with a real intent to tackle the problems which it poses for them. Instead, they snipe at those who disagree with them. Eastman discusses the beard of Karl Marx. Brooks indulges in his petty psychological assumptions about writers whose books he would like to burn. These men render trivial the discussions and the controversies which rage over the most serious problems which the human race faces in this era.

The statement that Brooks lacks historical understanding is very appropriate. His recent studies of the past merely make a doily out of American history; he wants American literature—after all that has happened in this century—to extend this simple design. He wishes that a new Saint Augustine would rise from out of our society. It is characteristic of men lacking any historic sense that when they come face to face with serious social problems in a troubled age, they always turn their eyes to some renowned thinker of the past, and they wish that he would be resurrected in order that he might solve for them, the problems which they cannot solve for themselves. And alas, there is no Saint Augustine: there is only Van Wyck Brooks. The similarity between Saint Augustine and Van Wyck Brooks is to be found in the zeal which they have both shown in hunting out heretics. But there, the similarity both begins and ends.

P.R. should continue to criticize such men as Brooks and Archibald MacLeish. They are attacking the entire basis on which modern literature, thought, and science is founded. And in doing this, they are most assur-

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edly setting the basis for staging a kind of Moscow Trials of American culture. It is to be observed that they do not ask—do the writers we disagree with try honestly to tell the truth, do they try to give us true pictures of life? It seems that this question is as important to them, as was the question of truth to Mr. Vishinsky. As Macdonald states, we are seeing a repetition of the thirties: rather, it is a continuation of tendencies that were set in motion in that decade. Although the vocabulary is now somewhat revised, the attacks on serious writers are of the same calibre as those which made dreary so much of the literary polemics of the thirties. In those days, many writers penned *mea culpa* articles for *New Masses* declaring that they repented the sin of having "bourgeois origins": now, different writers are busily engaged in a new series of confessions, as follows: I confess that I once tried to think, that I once tried to write decent articles, decent books, decent novels. Forgive me, I will not write any more such articles, books, novels.

To all these penitents, I wish to offer some advice. I have culled it from a book entitled *The Flowering of New England.* It reads: "Literary men indulge in humbug only at a price."

LIONEL TRILLING

As I read Brooks's address to the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, I thought: "And Shakespeare—whatever will he do with that man of negation, questioning, disgust, verbalism? So disillusioned a man and often so very difficult a writer—will Shakespeare turn out to be Primary?" And as I thought of Shakespeare it occurred to me that Brooks had quite made up his mind that literature was divided between Iago and Othello, the base Iago representing negative intellect, the noble Othello representing the Affirmation of Values. And the more I read the more precise the analogy grew. I remembered that Othello, though he is much concerned with sight, is so preoccupied with his Affirmation of Values that he cannot see what is before his eyes, just as Mr. Brooks cannot see what is in a given book: it seemed to me that Othello listening to Cassio talk about Bianca and thinking Desdemona was the subject was very like Brooks reading Henry James or Proust or Joyce. And as I watched Brooks's savagery grow, the Othello connection grew clearer still: in order to affirm his Values, Brooks must kill off the Desdemona of moral sensibility. Honor triumphs, and stupidity and cruelty with it; the nobility of Othello masks a destructiveness rather greater than Iago's.

Literature, I suppose, has not recovered from the decay of religion. For it is certainly clear that what Mr. Brooks wants is religion and not literature at all. This is a perfectly respectable desire, but Mr. Brooks ought to name it properly. He ought not make Primary Writers into Church Fathers carrying the Torch of Life in a Pageant of Progress.

Macdonald's article on Brooks is very just so far as its literary judgment goes. I do not share his feelings about the political importance of Brooks's recent attitudes; it seems to me that people will not willingly

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enter the moral stuffiness that Brooks desires. And I do not share Macdonald's assumption that socialism promises a moral and literary regeneration.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Among those invited to comment was T. S. Eliot, to whom we sent airmail a copy of Brooks' paper and of Macdonald's article. The following cablegram has just come:

LETTER JUST RECEIVED QUITE AGREE STOP HOPE SEND COMMENTS BEFORE FEBRUARY BEST XMAS WISHES . . . THOMAS ELIOT

CONTRIBUTORS

WILLIAM TROY, who has written frequently for us, is head of the English Department of Bennington College. . . . VICTOR SERGE'S most recent novel is *S'Il Est Minuit Dan le Siecle* (1940, Paris). . . . WALLACE STEVENS is the author of *Harmonium*, *The Man with the Blue Guitar*, and other books of verse. . . . LEWIS FISHER lives in Aurora, N. Y. He writes: "You may be interested to know I have spent over a decade writing a very long, very serious novel, *A Chicago Pastoral*, without trying any shorter forms until it was finished." . . . MARIANNE MOORE'S latest book is *What Are Years*. . . . D. S. SAVAGE has contributed to *Horizon* and other magazines. . . . RANDALL JARRELL, well-known for his poetry and criticism, teaches at the University of Texas. . . . LIONEL ABEL, who has contributed verse and criticism to PARTISAN REVIEW, lives in Rockaway Park, N. Y. . . . J. PATRICK BYRNE lives in Ireland. . . . PAUL GOODMAN, whose novel, *The Grand Piano, or The Almanac of Alienation*, Colt Press has just published, is a frequent contributor to PARTISAN REVIEW. . . . STEPHEN SPENDER, the English poet, is an editor of *Horizon*. . . . RAYNER HEPPENSTALL is an English novelist, author of *The Blaze of Noon*. . . . NICHOLAS MOORE is an English poet. . . . H. J. KAPLAN is a young writer who lives in Chicago. . . . HAROLD ROSENBERG has published verse and criticism in *Poetry*, PARTISAN REVIEW, and other magazines. . . . F. W. DUPEE, a member of the English Department of Columbia University, was formerly an editor of PARTISAN REVIEW. . . . KARL KORSCH'S most recent book is his study, *Karl Marx*. He lives in Boston. . . . Alfred A. Knopf is publishing this spring WELDON KEES' novel, *Fall Quarter*.

Some of our readers may have been puzzled by the fact that the author of "Genesis of 'Swann'" in the last issue was *Alfred* Vigneron on the cover, and *Robert* Vigneron elsewhere. The correct name is Robert, and M. Vigneron is a member of the Department of Romance Languages of the University of Chicago. How "Alfred" crept in we don't know—possibly some one was thinking of Alfred De Vigny. We wish to express our apologies to Professor Vigneron for the mistake, and to thank him for his good nature about it.

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Mighty Good To Me

Lewis Fisher

WE WERE SPENDING a few days in Warm Springs, Virginia, and it seemed afterwards that the purpose of the trip had been to hear her say it—'her' being an old Negress, and 'it' being to her just a casual remark or question with which she finished out our conversation. Or at least finished it so far as my memory goes. But maybe I was a little stunned, as by a revelation.

They treat the Negroes very nicely in that neighborhood. More than mere courtesy: they even take a great deal of pains to train them for an occupation. Their darkies have been educated into almost perfect servants, very kind, very thoughtful, anticipating every movement you might need to make, always pleased about your tips—which anyway occur only on the last day. And perfectly harmless, we were assured. Our hostess herself walked through their village without the least misgiving, as you might in a kindergarten. I'm certain she found their silence, or soft brevities, a relief from the conversation of her paying guests, who were roughly from New York. The time I met her there she was so relaxed and sad I hardly recognized her.

We had taken all the drives, had bathed in the springs, had gone the shorter rambles, and I, who climb better than my wife, had walked the ridge. I had looked down on the handsome wheeling buzzards, or east and west at ridge after ridge disappearing inaudibly into one blue trill. Their spring had begun in earnest, and going shirt-off on those high paths I had a good start on my summer's burn. We weren't far enough south for the citrus or the sea shells; a sunburn was the one southern export we'd take home with us.

So on this blue moist early-season Sunday the new thing left for us was evidently to attend the Negro church. We hesitated even to speak of the desire since we knew no objection would be made and we wanted not to abuse our position. If religion was a

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solace, these people had at least the right not to be gaped at while being solaced. Yet in such situations one hesitates and goes ahead. We spoke of it to our hostess, who insisted we need have no scruples. They were children, really, and would be ever so pleased if we'd pay them this attention. They'd be proud to have us. The church, for some reason, lay beyond the settlement, in the open fields.

Well, the church is not what I remember. The singing was undistinguished and the preaching only moderately dull. There was a not quite childlike, though somewhat unpleasant, effort to cash in on the upper class attendance. We were, at some length, made to feel that any sound of coin would be distinctly out of character when the basket reached our party. It became just a decent routine case of everybody's trying rather dismally to live up to what was expected of him. There was never the remotest approach to that Negro preacher who rolled forth the splendor of: "Moses was a nomad, but not in the Leibnitzian sense." No, the church part seemed no solace to any of those present.

But we had become a group. And since all the others chose to ride over I had gone along earlier, alone, for the sake of strolling through the lazier preparatory part of morning, the blank time after breakfast and before the start of serious cooking. No one was doing anything. I had on my light gray suit, but everyone not in his own yard was dressed up too.

She was sitting dreamily on her stoop, a little past the village. Although neither fat nor wearing the bandana, she was so typical a mammy that in a larger place I would have suspected the chamber of commerce. She had everything—the smile, the white white hair, the ashy calico, the ability to sag with porch and pillar —right down to the corn cob pipe. The cabin was sheer plagiarism from *Tobacco Road.*

When she removed the pipe to smile more, her smile included me as naturally as if I'd been a hen. I leaned against her gate—which corrects what I said about *Tobacco Road.* If there was a gate in that set, a tall man would hardly dare lean against it. She seemed to have the cabin to herself, as I the lane. Things were planted in the yard but hadn't yet identified themselves. The jonquils had only then opened. I couldn't tell which birds belonged there and which were stopping over.

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We exchanged the usual compliments and spoke favorably of the sun before we drifted off into philosophy. This arrived by way of Harlem. I hadn't thought of her as feeder to that population but she had children in it. She was not satisfied by what particulars they furnished. She used my help in making New York real, and I said the more indulgent things about it. Having lived also in Chicago I knew some pleasanter details toward freedom after hours.

She smoked and nodded and enjoyed the sun and asked and reconstructed Harlem. I too had got quite beyond a mere collector's interest.

"The Lord," was her conclusion, "has been mighty good to me."

We were by now in full philosophy and so I asked her to define her terms; to tell me, as I put it, what she meant.

"Mighty good to me," she said, using the argument by repetition.

She paused to blow out incense.

"My children," she explained, "were always even, always came in pairs."

As soon as I got any meaning from this, I thought of twins. Such a constancy seemed strange, but I still hadn't understood pure essential orderliness in her conception of it. However she treated me with patience and went on.

"No, only one pair of twins. He works in Richmond and the girl was married, in Louisville I remember. But always if I had, say, a girl, then the next one was a boy. Mighty good to me. Or when I lost a baby, then that time the next would be the same kind to keep it even."

The scheme penetrated. It was impressive; we lost ourselves some moments in its contemplation.

"Finally I had ten, all living, five one way, five the other."

She smoked again in the descended peace around us.

"You might think I had enough by then," and clearly she meant enough of bounty. "But He been *mighty* good to me. Now they old enough to die it keeps the same. First a woman die and then a man. I got six now, still divided pretty."

I didn't inquire about grandchildren. From her silence they fell outside the pattern. One mustn't ask too much of life. And

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why should she feel any restlessness because a church bell was ringing urgently. She didn't need to go. She sat where she was, with harmony about her as a turtle always has his roof and is excused from seeking it.

Suddenly I noticed that a complete difference had crept into her way of speaking to me from what my week had begun to make sound customary. Her first remark had been "Yas sir" when I'd informed her that the day was fine, since when the Sirs had utterly dropped out. The reason I noticed suddenly is that, leaning on her hospitable gate, I had for a while forgotten that we were both not simply people. Perhaps I should mention that actually I have never yet been knighted so that in the first days there this bombardment of Sirs had fallen on my ears a bit strangely.

She too may have noticed something not quite usual about the way we talked. Anyway we were now partly emerged from the adoration of her mystery and it was time we turned to whatever should be next. She removed her pipe again to speak, and said then, unemphatically, what I was surprised to hear, what seemed so revealing that I don't recall exactly how we parted or know what other explanation of our tone occurred to her.

"And you, Mister," her question was: "Are you a Negro?"

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The Dial: A Retrospect†

Marianne Moore

AS GROWTH-RINGS in the cross section of a tree present a contrastingly differentiated record of experience, successive editorial modifications of a magazine adjoin rather than merge; but the later *Dial* shared or thought it shared, certain objectives of its predecessors.* It is that *Dial* which I know best, and when I think of it, recollections spring up, of manuscripts; of letters; of people.

I think of the compacted pleasantness of those days at 152 West 13th Street, and the three-story brick building with carpeted stairs, fireplace and white mantel-piece rooms, business office in the first story front parlor, and of plain gold-leaf block letters, 'The Dial,' on the windows to the right of the brown stone steps leading to the front door. There was the recurrent flower-crier in summer, with his slowly moving wagon of pansies, petunias, agaratum; of a man with straw"*ber*"ies for sale; or a certain fishman with his pushcart-scales, and staccato refrain so unvaryingly imperative, summer or winter, that Kenneth Burke's bit of parenthetic humor comes back to me—"I think if he stopped to sell a fish, my heart would skip a beat."

I recall a visiting editor's incredulity on receiving the statement, "To me it's a revel," after asking if I did not find reading manuscript tiresome; —manuscripts meaning the requested, the volunteered, and the recommended; that third and sometimes uneasy entrant inducing a wish not infrequently, that the roles of sponsor and author might be interchanged as when in a letter of introduction, a (Persian, I think) typographic neighbor wrote us, "In the country where I came from, the people say: 'Ham Liyarat, ham Túja rat'—Both pilgrimage and business, and so it is. Miss Z would like to have you see some of her poems."

Before being associated with *The Dial* editorially, I had been a subscriber, and still feel the impact of such writing as the W. B. Yeats reminiscences,—"Four Years," "More Memories," and "An Autobiographic

†Miss Moore has requested us to print the following footnote: Since this article has been deferred until it follows the editorial, *10 Propositions on the War* in the July-August issue, may I say that I am not co-operative with that statement; that I am intensely pro-Churchill, pro-DeGaulle, and pro-U.S. defense effort. MARIANNE MOORE.

**The Dial,* founded in 1840 with Margaret Fuller as editor, Emerson as next editor, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Hawthorne and others, as contributors, was discontinued after four years. In 1880 it was re-established by Francis F. Browne of Chicago, but in 1917 there was a change in editorial policy; the publication offices were moved to New York and as a fortnightly with socially analytical and humanitarian emphasis, it was varyingly edited, first by George Bernard Doulin, then by Robert Morss Lovett; with Thorsten Veblen, Helen Marot, Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Harold Stearns and others as contributing editors. In 1920 it was refashioned and brought out as a non-political monthly of "art and letters" by Scofield Thayer, Editor, and J. S. Watson, President; with Lincoln MacVeagh as Treasurer,—[and was entitled *The Dial,* The Dial Publishing Company Inc. being the full title, as it had been of the fortnightly *Dial.* The Dial Press, it might be noted, was not synonymous with it, but a separate organization.] Then with Stewart Mitchell as Managing Editor, followed by—though not always with the same title—Gilbert Seldes, Alyse Gregory, Kenneth Burke, and Marianne Moore, it was discontinued with the July issue, 1929.

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Fragment"; Paul Valéry's "An Evening with M Teste"; Mary Butts' "Speed the Plow"; D. H. Lawrence's sketches, "Rex," and "Adolph." I recall the aplomb of "Thus to Revisit," by Ford Madox Ford and the instructively mannerless manner of W. C. Blum's pages on Rimbaud; the photograph of Rimbaud as a child, reproduced next the translation of *A Season in Hell;* and Julien Benda's statement in *Belphegor,* "the problem of art is to discipline emotion without losing it." There was the continually surprising work of E. E. Cummings; William Carlos Williams' dangerous brio; the exciting unconformity of the "Bantams in Pine Woods" group of poems by Wallace Stevens. Thomas Mann's "German Letter" was, in effect, a commentary on his fiction, as Ezra Pound's "Paris Letter" and T. S. Eliot's "London Letter" italicized their poetry. I recall the strong look of H. D.'s "Helios" on the page, and my grateful scepticism in receiving her suggestion that I offer work also.

Among the pictures, as intensives on the text, were three verdure-tapestry-like woodcuts by Galanis; Rousseau's lion among lotuses; "The Philosophers" by Stuart Davis; Adolph Dehn's "Viennese Coffee House"; and Kunioyshi's curious "Heifer"—the forehead with a star on it of separate whorled strokes like propeller-fins; Earnest Fiene; Charles Sheeler, Arthur Dove, John Marin, Georgia O'Keefe, and Max Weber, and Carl Sprinchorn and the Zorachs and Bertram Hartman; Wyndham Lewis, Brancusi, Lachaise, Elie Nadelman, Picasso and de Chirico, Cocteau line drawings, and Seurat's "Circus."

Such titles as "Sense and Insensibility," "Engineering with Words," "The American Shyness"; and the advertising—especially some lines "Against the Faux Bon" and "technique" in lieu of "genius,"—seemed to say, "We like to do this and can do it better than anyone else could"; and I was self-warned to remain remote from so much rightness; finding also in Alyse Gregory's delicately terse and lethal honesty, something apart from the stodgy world of causal routine.

There was for us of the staff, whatever the impression outside, a constant atmosphere of excited triumph; and from Editor or Publisher, a natural firework of little parenthetic wit too good to print.

In analysing D. H. Lawrence's social logic, one usually disagrees with him, but I remember the start of pleasure with which I came on his evocation of violets, in the introduction to his *Pansies:* "Pensées, like pansies, have their roots in the earth, and in the perfume there stirs still the faint grim scent of under-earth. Certainly in pansy-scent and in violet-scent it is so; the blue of the morning mingled with the corrosive smoulder of the ground." As typical of the unaccommodating poetic intensity of W. B. Yeats, was the article on "The Death of Synge": "Synge was the rushing up of buried fire, an explosion of all that had been denied or refused, a furious impartiality, indifferent turbulent sorrow. Like Burns' his work was to say all that people did not want to have said."

And there were our at times elusive foreign correspondents: as commenting from Germany, Thomas Mann; Italy, Raffaello Piccoli; Madrid,

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Ortega y Gasset; Vienna, Hugo von Hofmannsthal; Dublin, John Eglinton; London, Raymond Mortimer; Paris, Paul Morand; Russia, Maxim Gorki;—active. And Bela Belazs (Hungary), and Otakar Fisher (Prague), inactive. Those were days when as Robert Herring has said, things were opening out, not closing in.

I recall the condensed but explicit anatomy of duties with which the office was provided; and despite occasional athletically protesting editorial reciprocities, the inviolateness—to us—of our "contributing editor-critics," Gilbert Seldes (The Theatre); Henry McBride (Modern Art); Paul Rosenfeld and then Kenneth Burke (Music). Even recklessly against the false good, they surely did represent *The Dial* in "encouraging a tolerance for fresh experiments and opening the way for a fresh understanding of them."

Rivalling manuscript in its significance, were the letters; those from certain contributors, indivisible as art from their more impersonal writings. The effect of vacuum silence and naturalness in a note or two from D. H. Lawrence, belongs for me with Mabel Dodge Luhan's statement, " 'the inessentials' seemed deadly to him, who knew how to savor a piece of crusty bread on the side of a hill."

11 Feb 1929

c/o Signor G. Orioli
6 Lungarno Corsini
Florence Italy

Dear Marianne Moore

. . . I should have liked to see you in New York—but how was I to know you would like to see me! — many people don't. . . . We are staying here in Bandol near Marseille a little longer, then going back to Italy — so will you write me there, if you get the poems. And many greetings.—

Regarding my statement about the Pensées: there are lines in the book, that are the outcome of certain hurts and I am not saying that in every case the lines themselves leave no shadow of hurt, . . .

18 April 1929

Dear Marianne Moore

. . . I like the little group you chose—some of my favorites— . . . I think I shall withdraw that introduction from the book form—so you just keep any part of it you wish, & use it with your group of poems, as you wish. . . .

I knew some of the poems would offend you. But then some part of life must offend you too, and even beauty has its thorns and its nettle-stings and its poppy-poison. Nothing is without offense, & nothing should be: if it is part of life, & not merely abstraction.

We must stay in this island a while, but my address is best c/ G. Orioli.

All good wishes
D. H. LAWRENCE

And from Paul Valéry in reply to a letter about his *Introduction to the Method of Leonardo da Vinci: Note and Digression, Part I*: . . . "I am very pleased to hear you have found some spiritual refreshment in a work which so many readers feel a little too much hard and bitter tasted for common sense. But lucidity and will of lucidity lead their passionate lover in crystal abysses deeper than old Erebus. . . ."

Besides humor in our correspondence, there was satire, as in A.E.'s reply to a suggestion that it was a long time since he had sent us work,

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"Hawks should not prey upon hawks." And an ostensibly formal humoresque of our own, concocted by Kenneth Burke, recurs to me,—the answer to an advertising manager who complained that if books which had received long reviews and unanimous approbation elsewhere, were to be damned at *The Dial* by brief notices and faint praise, might they not be damned somewhat more promptly? To this complaint from an acquaintance of Mr. Burke's who had not foreseen that someone he knew might be answering it, Mr. Burke said, ". . . Why not give *The Dial* credit. As you have said, under our silence the book went through five editions. Now that we have spoken there may never be a sixth. Further, we are happy to learn that whereas we had feared that our 'Briefer Mention' was a week or two late, the continued success of the book has kept our comment green. We are, you might say, reviewing a reprint—a courtesy not all gazettes will afford you. . . . And are you, after all, so sure that a book benefits by having the reviews all let off at once like something gone wrong in the arsenal, followed by an eternity of charred silence."

And we were not without academic loyalty in the guise of reproof, one complainant who has been writing some very good verse, taking us to task about a review which he considered "unfair to the author" in being "nothing but a warped summary" and "dangerous" as "a bad piece of work . . . sponsored by a magazine of *The Dial's* reputation." Almost simultaneous with this letter, we received from the ill-treated author, one that said in conclusion, "And may I tell you how much I was pleased with A.A.A.'s review of —— ——? Quite apart from the fact that it was kind, it seemed to me an almost miraculous 'summing-up.' I have always wondered if A.A.A. was a nom de plume. Will you extend my thanks to him or her?"

Occasional inadvertences, moreover, at the expense of the acting editor were not wanting; sundry inquiries requesting the attention of the Active Editor; a letter from one of our Spanish contributors beginning, "My respectable Miss:" and resulting from statements about the *Dial* Award as acknowledging a contribution to "letters," offers to provide whatever sort of letters we required.

It was an office truism that declined manuscript accompanied by a printed card had been read as carefully as manuscript returned with a letter. But occasionally there was the compliment of anger from those whose grievances were imaginary and whose grudges were real; who were so incurious in their reading as to accuse us of anti-Semitism, or hid salt between pages to test the intensiveness of our reading. But not all "contributors who were not allowed to contribute" bit the hand that had not fed them. One to whom Alyse Gregory had given advice, replied that before submitting work to *The Dial* he had not known there was such a thing as editorial reciprocity, that he had rejection-slips enough "to paper the Washington Monument inside and out"; that at last, however, as the result of *The Dial's* encouragement, he was appearing regularly in the XYZ,—(a fiction magazine of robust circulation). And I recall the gener-

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ous disappointment of a writer whose work had elicited suggestions, when we returned to him a check that he had thought might be "used for a reckless meal."

Misunderstandings were with us in most instances, like scepticism that "doubts in order to believe"; and anything in the way of ill-wishing fulminations was constantly neutralized by over-justice from other quarters; by such stringence against encroachment, as Raymond Mortimer's when he wondered if certain requested work might not be done more to our liking by someone else; and by his patience when *Dial* work of his was reprinted without his permission; by Gilbert Seldes' magnanimity toward a minor phase of collaboration, and L. A. G. Strong's willingness to believe that editorial crotchets are not all of the devil; by Yvor Winters' probity of resistance and tincture of editorial virus; by such quixotry as Professor Saintsbury's when hesitating to incorporate in an article on Poe, material that Andrew Lang had not published,—saying once an article had been declined, he did not care to offer it "to the most different of editors"; by Professor Charles Sears Baldwin's acquiescent addendum in omitting a touch of underlining humor, "You are not only good friends but good critics."

To some contributors—as to some non-contributors—*The Dial*, and I in particular, may have seemed quarrelsome, and it is regrettable that manners should be subordinated to matter. Mishaps and anomalies, however, but served to emphasize for me the untoxic positiveness of most writers. And today, previous victims of mine have to dread from me, as preempting the privilege of the last word, nothing more than solicitude that all of us may write better.

I think of Mr. McBride—his punctuality and his punctuation, each comma placed with unaccidental permanence, and the comfortable equability of his pitiless ultimatums. One does not lose that sense of "creeping up on the French," of music, of poetry, of fiction, of society sparkle, that came with his visits to the office. He did not "specialize in frights," nor in defamation, nor nurse grudges; and too reverent to speak in religious accents often, could not trust himself to more than refer to personal losses, sentiment with him was so real.

Gaston Lachaise's stubbornness and naturalness were a work of art above even the most important sculpture. Admitting to an undiminishing sense of burden that made frivolities or time-killings a sort of poison to him, he was as deliberate as if a potion had put him under a spell. I remember his saying with almost primitive-tribal moroseness, "But I believe in a large amount of work"; as on another occasion, "Cats. I could learn a million of things from cats." And there was, *when* there was, E. E. Cummings, the really successful avoider of compromise, of scarecrow insincerity, of ordinary rubber-stamp hundred percent deadness.

I think of Charles Sheeler coping with the difficulties of photographing for reproduction, Lachaise's polished brass head of Scofield Thayer, mounted on glass,—glitteringly complicated from any angle—and have

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never seen anything effected with less ado or greater care; these scientifically businesslike proceedings relating themselves perforce with the simplified aspect of the Bucks County Barn and often reproduced winding stair-turn.

Decorum, generosity, and some genial pictorial improvements to the proof-sheets, were matched in Gordon Craig by an aesthetic unsubservience justifying the surname crag as synonym for Craig. I recall Ezra Pound's precision as translator of Boris de Schloezer,—reinforced by an almost horrendous explicitness on returned proofs. But nothing supplants in recollection, the undozing linguistics and scholarly resourcefulness of Ellen Thayer as Assistant Editor; the inevitable occasional untender accusation of stupidity or neglect of author's revisions being found invariably to be reversible.

Padraic Colum's clemency and efflatus are not confined to the printed page, and upon his visits to the office, routine atmosphere was transformed into one of discovery. And John Cowper Powys, inalienable verbalist and student of strangeness, inventor of the term "fairy cardinal" for Padraic Colum, seemed himself, a supernatural being; so good a Samaritan, any other phase of endowment, was almost an overplus. Indeed as has been said by Mrs. Watson of his conversation, "He is so intense, you don't know whether he's talking or listening." And his brother Llewelyn's dislike of "a naturalist with an umbrella," of shams and pickthank science, come back to one in connection with his gift for metaphor. At all events, one who has known the shallows of a tree-bordered stream is not likely to forget his phrase, "the cider-coloured reaches of The Stour." And though suicidally kind to victims of injustice, he was as aloof from the world of non-books as some subterranean depth inhabited by fish without eyes.

Above all, for an aesthetically inflexible morality against "the nearly good enough"; for non-exploiting helpfulness to art and the artist, for living their own doctrine that "the love of letters knows no frontiers," Scofield Thayer and Dr. Watson stand foremost. One of my first recollections of their literary partnership was their support of James Joyce when *The Little Review* was censored for publishing *Ulysses*. "Our insistence that *The Dial's* award is not a prize is frequently taken to be a characteristic pedantry on our part," they said, but "a prize is something competed for, an award is given." And on another occasion, "it is given to afford the recipient an opportunity to do what he wishes and out of that to enrich and develop his work." Nor was a gift ever more completely transferred, without victimizing envolvements.

As it was Abraham Lincoln's ideal to lift "artificial weights from all shoulders . . . and afford all an unfettered start," so here. And in lifting weights, money has its part. Contributions were paid for on acceptance; for prose, two cents a word; for verse, twenty dollars a page or part of a page; reviews for the Briefer Mention department, two dollars each. There were not special prices for special contributors,—a phase of chivalry toward beginners that certain of them suspiciously disbelieved in. Any

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writing or translating by the editors was to be done without payment, Dr. Watson's participation under the name of W. C. Blum being contrived with "a quietness amounting to scandal." And payment was computed in amounts that are multiples of five. For example, as stated in our manual of procedure: "if a manuscript counts up to $15.98 or $16.01 or $18.01, the writer should be paid $20.00; and if same is more than $90.00 it should be computed in multiples of ten."

Writing is an undertaking for the modest. Those of us employed at *The Dial*, felt that the devisers of the organization we represented could do better than we, what we were trying to do, and we always will feel, *The Dial's* strength of purpose toward straightness, crispness, and usefulness. "If," as has been said, "it had rough seas to navigate because it chose to sail uncharted zones, the structure was the better tested"; and we think back with gladness to the days when we were part of it.

Poems

Randall Jarrell

(This is supposed to be a parody of Miss Marianne Moore's poetry. I hope that it is accurate, admiring, and a little critical.)

THE COUNTRY WAS

all hills and all interesting—in one field
by a barn, by a haystack, were two 'real
    brand new lambs',
        three ewes too 'uncertain of their
election' to judge at all or require
    much more than
        lambs—believed in by another
        lamb, perhaps, but not by other

things. The 'impossible once-or-twice-seen'
freak flower 'marred by dew', smashed by tears, seems
    healthy by
        this starveling fantastic sawdust
changeling rag-Sambo scare-crow cur, with its
    embryo's
        generalized pink pig's head—un-
        suited for earth, as anyone

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but an ewe knows. Yet obviously no one
could 'harm seriously or curse at' so in-
nocent a
virgin—much less 'seethe, butcher, and
so forth and so forth', as poor Couperin
wrote strongly:
meaning tenors. One thinks all three
his mother and uncertainly

prances to each in his jointless graceless
ungainly knock-kneed stagger, as if fac-
ing nothing
but joy: the maturing half-wit
perfecting in these scrupulous scales its
cadenza,
the overwhelming responses
of the horned ram. The other raises

his head an inch and lets it drop with a
conclusiveness familiar to the ewes graz-
ing by the
barn and to the understanding
farmer as birth, but not yet as hackneyed
to the lamb,
who would perhaps not recognize
birth either. 'Just as advertised'

by the champion of Oxford and other
lost causes such as the classics, as the
man who 'saw
life steadily and saw it whole',
Sophocles got 'about twenty' firsts, still
thought: Better
to be dead than alive but best
of all not to have been born. Test

this response with the dead lamb and it rings
like a bell: iron. The live lamb's sprawling
bright gait is

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learned, exact, and in a way
magnificent, but after all play, a
prepara-
tion rather than the essential
life of sheep—dumb, but theirs and real.

Lionel Abel

THE IMMIGRANTS

Chagga, Arunta, Bata, Barabong.
Prompt and equipped with human vanity,
All sociologists, we go among
These nervous immigrants to humanity.
They missed the boat. Why did they miss it? Laws
Demented. Quotas. And they killed their great.
Amazed by blue they stayed. Because, because
Run over by a lion. Or just late.

Oh how could they make durable delay
Without book, kodak, Sunday supplement?
—Long before bowbend, singing string, or lasso—
What could they do but while epochs away,
Poor past folk breaking time in two? They spent
Their human substance. Talking to Picasso.

WHAT OF THE CHAIN REMAINS

O find him! find him! find that Jack of Jacks,
That necessary monster! Where is he
Who can absolve us of monstrosity?

He who can tuck a tail between his teeth
Struck with the mystery of words, he who can talk
Of a thick coil and comfort in the dark;

That mystic animal, that cross between
A brother who can climb on branching words,
A wordless brother tailed among the trees.

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J. Patrick Byrne

ETCHING

Before our Gaelic order passed
A poet had the power to cast
Blight on foe in flesh or purse
By limning him in blistering verse:
Amergin, Keating, Merriman,
The Dean, and Yeats—all barbed a rann;
Has the power come down to me?
This, then, mine enemy:

Meetly was the slut begot
In nuptial orgy when sire sot
Mounted that brobdingnagian trull.
Though Maids of Honour stank to Gul-
liver astride a monstrous teat,
Their perfumed bosoms passed for sweet
With lovers of appropriate size:
So sot approved that trull's gross thighs.
His drunkard's lust knew hurried levee;
Drunken sleep fell quick and heavy;
Fulfilled, and sated, bride and groom
Snored. Deep in enormous womb
Seed of sot's and trull's loud rut,
Foully fungoid, swelled to slut.
Thus began their country's shame
When Wigglesworth to Jordan came.

Now thirty-odd: bobbed, greasy hair
A frame for sodden eyes that stare;
Slobbering lips show yellow fangs;
Her dugs are sacks, and belly hangs;
As other cats' her breath smells sweet;
Water seldom sullies feet;
Conceived in alcoholic heat;
Graceful as any streel's her walk;
Virago's endless squall her talk.
Sure, little need for bitter verse;
To wish her length of days were worse,
She herself her own worst curse—
Woman foul as senile lust
That would, but cannot; fumbles dust. . . .

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Paul Goodman

WINTER 1939

In 1934, 5,
then were we alive!
after the experiments,
to few (and to no) audience
making art extreme because
of imminent utopian applause!
Then too the sit-down strikes
made flower Michigan for weeks
when the lads played basketball
in the interim of toil
—in the April and the June
of the decade now so coldly gone.
The prudent days were those
we took each thing for what it was!
then action was direct,
much therefore done by a little act,
till fixed institutions were
trembling on the brink of order.
When acts of witty power made
the energetic shoulders broad
disgraced themselves in '29
at last ashamed,—oh, then, then
a human smile was sometime seen
as well as th' universal smeer.
It was a time of fearful ease;
it was a time of waged peace.
In 1934, 5,
then we were alive!
in the April and the June
of the decade coldly gone!
But first new money gave new heart
to nummies we had almost hurt;
and soon we saw that 'revolutionary'
ignoramus meant and liar;
and now at last they have their war.

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From England
War And The Writer

Stephen Spender

EDITORS' NOTE: *This letter was written for publication in the December issue of* Common Sense. *Since it arrived too late for inclusion in that issue, and since it seems of special interest to* Partisan Review *readers, the editors of* Common Sense *have very kindly passed it on to us.*

London
Oct. 25, 1941.

Since my last letter, I have joined the A.F.S.—the Auxiliary Fire Service, soon to be renamed the National Fire Service. At present I am undergoing a fairly strenuous training, manning pumps, climbing ladders, jumping off roofs into the 'taut sheet,' etc.

I begin on this personal note, because you will then understand that I have been spending my time chiefly in the company of unskilled workmen, ex-clerks, and the like. But before I go on to discuss these, I should say why I chose to join the Fire Service, because my motives throw some light on the position of creative writers here.

Creative writers in wartime England have no status at all. They are neither reserved, nor given any kind of work as writers in the way that some journalists and painters who are appointed 'official war artists' or asked to do camouflage, are. They are driven either to join one of the armed forces or to use such pull as they may have to get into a reserved job, such as some Ministry or the B.B.C. In either case, the prospects of their being able to go on with their own work are extremely slight. If they are in the army, they become stupefied by the routine, the physical exercise, and the lack of any kind of solitude or privacy. If they are in a Ministry, they are likely to be transformed into hacks, civil servants, or/and careerists. Of the two alternatives, the more active life seems preferable, because it is at least a new experience.

The question of writers is rather complicated, and since it seems too late for the authorities in England to consider it now, perhaps it is not too late for America to do so with their writers. Some writers in the P.E.N. Clubs have recently issued a manifesto on the subject. They don't think that writers should be reserved from the war altogether, but that they should be given some opportunity to write. The conditions of modern totalitarian war are such that they might easily snuff out literature altogether (as they have already done in some countries) unless a little thought is given to the subject. One has only to think back to see that the conscription of say Shelley, Byron and Keats into the armies fighting

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against Napoleon would have made a considerable difference (perhaps not altogether a bad one) to English literature and thought. It is stupid not to realise that it might also have stopped the romantic movement altogether.

A hundred years ago, the intelligentsia, together with most of the people with whom they lived and for whom they worked, did not have to fight. Nowadays, everyone has to take a part in the war effort, so it would be artificial and unnatural to divorce the writer from his readers, who are mostly conscripted, by keeping him in cotton wool. At the same time, it does not seem satisfactory to stop him writing altogether.

Walt Whitman foresaw this problem when in *Democratic Vistas* he outlined his idea of the Divine Literatus. As I see it, he thought of the writer as the forerunner of the moral and intellectual consciousness of a coherent and intelligent democracy. The writer should travel, witness the experiences of the democracy and be able to assimilate and organize them, according to his imaginative gift. This task is something quite different from journalism which consists of reporting things that are not allowed to be reported and presenting points of view and agitation which suit the opportunistic needs of the country at some given moment. One would have thought that democracy at war could make effective use of writers who supported the democratic cause, and who could state its case in long terms which did not come up against the censorship and which contained deeper and more resilient truths than the agitation of the moment.

If America ever wants to appeal to the imaginative sympathy of England, I hope that the American government will give the opportunity to about twelve American 'literati' really to witness and to share every aspect of American life at a moment of great strain, and then give them the time to write what they would like about America. Make them join the army, the Civil Defense Forces, work in the factories, by all means: but guarantee them an opportunity to write.

Meanwhile I live the life of a navvy, and this gives me an opportunity, at any rate, to tell you what ordinary people in England are thinking just now.

The attitude of the miscellaneous collection of bricklayers, builders, navvies, clerks, commercial travellers, to whom I belong, is curious. They accept the war as inevitable, and they wish it to be won; at the same time, they do not think of it as their war. This is not because the war is the "bosses' war" (that feeling has rather disappeared since Russia came in), but simply because it is too large and vast and horrible for them. Only today the man standing next to me at drill said: "Ain't the business in Russia 'orrible? Anyway, p'rhaps it will teach ten or twelve people in the world to feel sorry for the slaughter they've caused." What is odd about this, is that I am sure his ten or twelve people would not be exclusively Germans, though perhaps three Germans would head the list. No, they would be the dictators, followed by one or two of our own politicians, followed perhaps by Laval, and then by a few big industrialists and arms'

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manufacturers. The point is that the 'little man' cannot imagine himself being really involved in anything so vastly horrible as the war. It is not that he considers himself better than it, but both smaller and saner.

The war has no glamour and very little hatred. If the Germans mean anything to my fellow Firemen, they mean a disease of which several of them have witnessed the horrible results in the form of mangled corpses during air raids. Our problem is to prevent and counteract the spreading of this disease—that is how they look at it. They take their work extremely seriously. A very large part of their conversation consists of the shop of people who are determined to know their job. They realize that sooner or later they will have to fight real fires, and they are determined to be as well qualified as possible. During this period of training, there is no slacking, no absenteeism, and no drinking. All this is rather a surprise to me.

The best quality of the people I work with is their unfailing kindness. The defects, eccentricities and shoddiness of life are too near to them for them to laugh at anyone for making a fool of himself. They need help too often themselves not to give it to others. When new recruits arrive, the older recruits go out of their way to help and make things easy for them. Excuses are made for even the most stupid and ridiculous bunglers on the ladders. It is not considered disgraceful to be afraid. At the back of all this, we are drawn together by a common wish to get on with the small things of our lives, looking after our families, cultivating our gardens, enjoying some degree of independence. The loss of the small business, the taxicab, the newspaper pitch, the shop in the back street, is a common grief which draws everyone together in a slight and tacit mourning.

The A.F.S. is in some ways a model democratic organization. The discipline is based on everyone recognizing that a certain degree of efficiency is necessary, that certain inefficiencies cause unnecessary risk of life. The old London Firemen who train us are indefatigable, patient, humorous, and never malicious. They are nothing like what I have imagined drill sergeants to be. They are often extremely funny, usually on purpose, and they show a manly contempt for 'fancy stuff' such as hydraulics. One or two of them are such good lecturers that I spend as much time trying to learn public speaking from them, as what they are saying. One day this week our instructor lectured twice for two hours on collective pumping, without seeming tired and without being boring for a moment (although the subject is one in which I am not specially interested).

There is no saluting in the A.F.S., and so far no one has been kept in or in any way punished. The bad sides of it are things such as feeding and sleeping arrangements which are very scrappy. Also, although when Firemen are actually allotted to their stations, they spend long hours doing absolutely nothing (as do all the Civil Defence workers) nothing seems to have been done about Civil Defence Education. A tremendous

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opportunity is being missed of helping people to make a better society and find better places for themselves in it.

The depressing part of the company of the unskilled English working man is his terrific disillusion. The good qualities of the people I am with lies in what they are and in their situation, not in what they think and believe. They are kind, because being very close to misfortune themselves, it is easy for them to sympathise with it in others. But, given the opportunity, on principle each one is entirely out for himself, and says so repeatedly all day long.

But this disillusion goes further than the working classes in England today. In spite of the talk about Reconstruction, there is no tangible grasp of what will be possible at the end of the war. Few people can think that we are fighting for a better society, and those few who do are strangely out of touch, people inflated by their own importance, people who make a living out of having exalted ideas (you can still make a small income this way). It is not their fault, it is the fault of a society that either grinds you in the machine or else pushes you right outside it, so that the intellectuals, the people who, after all, have many right ideas, are very isolated.

Perhaps it is difficult to pick out the bits from this morass of destruction. But I have tried to show that if the bits here are grim and dusty, they are not yet deformed by cruelty and vindictiveness. One of the most cheering things to my mind, is that on the other side, the bits have got *untidy*. Only someone who has lived (as I have) in Germany for some years can realise what it must mean to the Germans to have turned the whole continent of Europe into an enormous Ireland at the time of the worst troubles there. However many machines the Germans have, they must, to retain confidence in themselves, govern in a neat and orderly manner. If they have opponents, they must be neatly stored away in concentration camps. That disorders should go on in spite of repression and shooting squads, that is—well, isn't it very like the Weimar Republic at the time when the Nazis were reducing Germany to disorder, and at the same time producing martyrs?

So we live through this grimmest phase of the war, feeling that Russia is fighting our battles, that we can do very little to help, and dreading the result if we cannot help still further. The New Order has proved that it cannot govern, the boil of the German armies has burst, but no one knows how long the disorder can continue, or how much poisonous matter the boil still contains. But, despite the importance of machines, we may be coming to a stage when the men in the machines count. It may be that Hitler is making a mistake in thinking that mechanical superiority is all that matters, that human losses are irrelevant and that machines can be replaced. In that case, our own morale, and what we have to offer in the way of Reconstruction and new ideas will become enormously important.

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B. T. N. I.*

Rayner Heppenstall

SOME GUARDS are not so bad as others. On some guards you take about five minutes to mount, and then you get your tea. On others, you come out blancoed up to the eyes and stand around for an hour while sergeants, sergeant-majors, orderly officers and field officers criticise your chin, your buttons, the length of your hair, the powder on your brasses, the tar on your greatcoat hem and the dust in the welt of your boots until you begin to feel that you suffer from an halitosis and a B. O. so vigorous that only your best friend could ever keep quiet about them. On some guards you can take off your boots to sleep. On others, you keep on your greatcoat, tin-hat, gasbag, gas-cape, ammunition pouches and straps shoulder webbing all night and all the following day. On some guards you are turned out for a brigadier every half hour. On others, you mooch around for a bit in six balaclavas and three pairs of gloves, and the women of the village bring you out pots of tea and plates of soda bread, and as soon as the orderly officer has done his rounds you can wander into the cookhouse and make yourself tea and settle down for the night without ever bothering to go round and waken your relief.

In the artillery, you don't have bayonets. That is a mercy, but on the other hand it makes the I. R. A. less afraid of you. Not that I have anything against the I. R. A. I have been right in the heart of the Bad Lands, and I always found them to be nice chaps, generous with their drinks and free with their hearths and their daughters. They are quite frank. They say, "We like you, but we hate your uniform," and then they get on with the serious business of being friendly and keep it up long after you've made it clear that you're giving away no military information, even if you had any. But they do get the least bit troublesome once in a while. Twice they rushed our guard, not where I myself was stationed, but at Ballydowndilly where the horse-fairs are held every month. Three of the 16th Cwmrhondda Horse were stabbed when they pinched the only three girls in the village on Boxing Night. And I have been told of several houses in which are kept rifles and ammunition that the Quartermaster has been explaining away for a long time.

Unfortunately, these excitements are rare, and I recommend any man of sensitive nature to get a stripe or become an officer's batman or a sanitary orderly at the first opportunity. The best you can ordinarily hope for on a guard is that somebody will get a spare round up the spout and let

*The Irish Command. The letters stand for British Troops in North Ireland.

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it off not too near your head. At Blackwater Dun there was a canal end with three coal barges and two swans on it, and bullets frequently came hissing over the canal at night. One came up through the floor of McGinty's warehouse about two feet away from my bed when I had only been in the army two days, and the first time little Silverman was on guard (he is a barber in Hackney E 5, and he sings operatic arias all day long) he let one off in the guardroom while he was loading and filled Reg Roberts's eyes with plaster and made my right ear deaf for half an hour. My head was very near the breech, and I went on feeling at my nose and ears for a long time to see if anything was missing before we saw where the bullet was, in the wall no more than four inches from where Reg Roberts's head had been.

Guards are also useful as a means of calming down young officers. Connie Kendall made himself so unpopular at one time that he could not be seen around after dusk without somebody letting off a spare round at him. Eventually, he was sent away for three months until the bad feeling had died down.

There are also cookhouse duties. Some people think they are worse than guards. Some say they would do three cookhouses for one guard any day, and some say the opposite. The two have one thing in common. They destroy one's sense of time, and this is a source of anxiety. One is always taken aback, coming off guard or out of the cookhouse, to find that only a day has passed and that one has missed only one set of battery orders. Coming out of the cookhouse, one suffers from a combination of indigestion and nausea. One's fingers are spongy, and there is a sore on the first finger of one's right hand.

A drill order is sometimes worse than either guards or cookhouses. One gets up earlier than usual. Sometimes one sleeps out in a draughty barn or even in the open under only one blanket. The skin is rubbed off one's bottom unless one rides in a wireless truck. And unless one is lucky or gifted with foresight, one lives on a single bully-beef sandwich from six in the morning until ten at night. All the same, drill orders are without monotony. On the last regimental exercise, for instance, a Don R[2] broke his ribs, two quads[3] were left in a field and forgotten with their drivers and passengers, and an old woman kept fainting. We were firing into Lough Neagh. Lough Neagh is one of the sources of the Atlantis legend. It is an enormous stretch of water so gradual in depth that you can wade into it for a mile and a half from any point on the periphery. It contains eels which used to be exported to Manchester and a fish called 'pollan' which is not found elsewhere. The Bad Lands, where political desperadoes hide out when there are troubles, lie round its southern shore.

[2]Signaller's code for 'dispatch rider.'
[3]Semi-armoured vehicles which draw the guns and accommodate their crews.

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We were firing into Lough Neagh, and one of our gun positions lay but two or three hundred yards behind a row of cottages, where some of the signallers had gone scrounging tea. A widow who was making tea fainted with anticipation two minutes before each shell was fired, and the signallers had to keep catching her. It was a pity that she missed the flight of the shell every time, for the flight of a shell and its invisible or smudgily visible suction upon the air can be very soothing to the nerves.

This was not very far from the border. The border haunts everybody's mind when he is at all browned off. It is so easy to get across in civvies. You just ride across on a bus, and nobody looks at your papers. The trouble is that when they find you they don't intern you but merely send you back.

On another drill order, half the regiment wandered over the border by mistake and stayed over it for several hours without anybody taking any notice.

"Dummy"

That Saturday afternoon I was at the railway station getting tickets to White Harbour for Bill Budge and myself. A well-made, red-haired young man in a new overcoat was standing outside the booking-office, and I asked him what time it was. He did not answer, so I touched his arm. He turned rather abruptly, and when I asked him again what time it was he touched his mouth and his ears with the tips of his fingers.

It was also a Saturday afternoon when I saw his sister for the first time. Bill Budge and I had bought our tickets to White Harbour, and there was half an hour to wait for the train, so we went into the boot-shop across the road where they make you tea and toast if you want it. While we were there drinking tea and eating toast a good-looking girl of thirty came in and conducted some business with the cobbler. Her manner was not conspicuous, but when she had gone the cobbler's wife, who makes the tea and toast and who is very charming and must have been quite beautiful in her younger days, said that the girl was deaf and dumb, that she had a brother in the same condition as herself and that she was a very clever girl and a dress-maker.

This was not long after our arrival in Ballyduff, and presently the camp as a whole was aware of at least the girl's existence. She was spoken of as "Dummy," and it was said that she . . .-ed like a rattlesnake.

* * * *

Marshall lives in the next hut. It is the HQ drivers', Don R's and tiffies' hut. They are a tough lot. Don R Evans, with his purple, pitted nose and false teeth, belonged to a gang of petty thieves in Nottingham. Averbach was a fair-ground showman. Marshall is a tall, thin fellow built on the lines of the traditional film cowboy. He contests with another driver and one of my sanitary orderlies the reputation of having the largest male organ in the battery. He takes a poor view of me. When I

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appear, he nudges whoever is with him and says, "Look who's here." He cannot be a really strong individual because it is obvious that he says things like this to make himself feel big, but he does put over quite a successful act as a strong man, and he is one of our small-arms experts as well as a lance-bombardier artificer. However, he interests me for one reason only. He is the only man who admits or claims to have been with "Dummy" himself in a sexual sense.

He told the story to Bombardier Allen. He stood outside "Dummy's" house in the high street and beckoned her out. She came bringing with her a pencil and paper, on which she wrote, "I am not well." Marshall did not cotton on to this at first, and they went out for a walk. When Marshall set about fixing the girl he found out what was wrong, but she gave him what he described as "a . . . against the wall."

As I say, Marshall is the only man who personally admits or claims to have been with "Dummy." But there is no lack of stories about the curious, brutish noises of appreciation she makes when confronted with spectacles of virility or directly assailed by it. Her face could I suppose be a whore's face, but it is very appealing. She is pale, and she is heavily and rather badly made-up, but she wears pretty colours, and she takes so much interest in whatever is going on around her. I saw her last Saturday, the 12th of July. We were drinking outside Alick's, which was full to capacity of Protestant Irish celebrating the Battle of the Boyne. "Dummy" stood at the bottom of the street in a blue dress, laughing with pleasure at our drunken or half drunken antics and evidently waiting for something outrageous to happen. She did not go to the dance afterwards. As the rest of the village whirled round singing "The Sash My Father Wore" and "The Green, Grassy Slopes of the Boyne" and screaming as Highland dancers do, I missed her.

Letter From The Country

D. S. Savage

Dear Friends:

Perhaps you would be interested to have a very brief account of our existence since the war. There is not really much to tell: quite simply, when the war broke out we decided the country was more healthy than the town, and as (a) my wife and child had been sent out near Cambridge at the beginning of the war under the Government's evacuation scheme, and (b) our thoughts for some time past had been turning towards a life in the country, I relinquished my office job in London and joined my family. After a month or so of living rather miserably billeted upon someone else in a desolate suburb of jerry-built "residences" clustered round a Victorian jam-factory, we found this cottage at a very cheap rent in a nearby, and although ruinous, quite charming village

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It was my intention to find a job in or near Cambridge, but it did not take me long to realise that in war time a pacifist is regarded as a kind of moral leper, and that practically the only work open to me was a kind of enlightened gang-labour organised by the county War Agricultural Committee, composed of similar outcasts engaged upon hedging and ditching, reclaiming fen land, and so on. There are large numbers of pacifists near here engaged on this kind of work, and as they are mainly artists, architects, musicians, writers, accountants or lecturers, doctors, etc., you can imagine that they are pretty inefficient labourers. Of course, the reason they are doing this work is that they have been ordered to do it by the Conscientious Objectors' Tribunals, as an alternative to military service.

I was fortunate enough to go before my tribunal quite early on in the war, before the war atmosphere had assumed its present fog-like quality, and also to have my tribunal in Cambridge, where there was an academic element sitting on the tribunal. Three other applicants, or whatever you call them, were there with me, each had his written statement read out, and was then questioned, harangued, or what not, by the tribunal. I happened to be the second, and after taking the oath on a white prayer book some singularly inane questions were put to me, which I answered quite sweepingly and categorically. One of the things which most amused me was the fact that as an "unemployed clerk" I was treated with, at first, very scant respect, but later I happened to mention that I was a writer and a poet, and from peremptoriness the tone of the tribunal altered to one of purring confidentialness. I think perhaps the main reason for my unconditional exemption was the fact, which evidently impressed the tribunal, that I had stated I was associated editorially with an American quarterly magazine. At any rate, *all* the applicants who were with me were likewise exempted. One of these was a very simple, uneducated farm-boy, who "just knew" that war was wrong: his simplicity and earnestness, plus his inarticulateness, was very impressive. Another was an earnest, anxious-to-please schoolmaster, of the kind who spends his holidays mixing with the unemployed in holiday camps, and who had got a plump clergyman to put in a word as to his excellent character. The other was a bible-punching "Brother," who had written a statement a mile long, which read like something out of Revelations. He appeared carrying a huge bible, and was very contemptuous of the whole tribunal. Altogether he put up the funniest performance I have ever heard outside of a place of entertainment. He was a mechanic or fitter of some sort. I thought the whole thing pretty ludicrous. There were about five members of the tribunal, and each received I know, several guineas for a few hours' sitting. At any rate the result was that I walked out with a ticket of freedom from interference from the army, which I was quite glad to have.

All that was nearly two years ago now, and since then I have led a somewhat peculiar existence on the money I have been receiving from the Labour Exchange. My position is a peculiar one because, (a) I will not

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do war work of any description, and, with the tribunal's finding, it seems I cannot be forced to do it; (b) as a moral outcast from the community I cannot get work of a sedentary kind (if I write for a job, mentioning that I am totally exempt from military service as a C.O. I never get a reply); (c) owing to a physical disability—which, had I not been a pacifist, would have precluded me from military service anyway—I cannot do manual labour of the chain-gang kind. So, until further totalitarian pressure is brought to bear upon me somehow or other, I am at liberty, on the borderline of starvation, to pursue my own interests.

However, we keep clear of the borderline in one way and another. We have a garden, in which I grow everything from cabbages to tomatoes; we have a goat who should be giving us milk later on, and now a few chickens who should, ditto, eggs.

One result of living in the country is the different texture of experience, the greater concreteness and solidity, seemingly, of the outer world, with a certain stabilisation of experience which comes from a growing familiarity with one particular environment. I do not think we shall go back to the town at all, afterwards. If we can in some way make a living in the country we shall do so. Our thoughts have been turning, like those of many other pacifists, to the idea of community, in the rather special sense in which it is coming to be used by pacifists. So that, with two or three other families, we are nursing this idea of living a group, communal life, as self-supporting as possible, on the land.

More and more I am coming to feel that there is a kind of process at work throughout society, coherent and logical, and that what is important is for us not to obstruct this process. So far as politics is concerned, I am becoming more of an individualist, but in a new and responsible sense. I think that with political movements and ideologies, in nine cases out of ten we are obstructing this process, imposing our will and mentality upon a fictitious actuality. The outer structure of society has become so cumbersome and unwieldy that it is hopeless for people of good will to try and interfere, they can only get their fingers or heads crushed. And we do see this, in England now—the detachment, palpable and undeniable, of the vast, massive superstructure of society, all that is a dead weight, a mass, non-human, from the effective world of men and women. The war is essentially an impersonal process, a movement of things, systems, masses. But with this increasing chasm between the human being and the non-human framework of society one thing is made clear—that purpose is absent from what is collective and impersonal, and present only in what is personal, individual. Historically, it seems to me, what is happening is a severance between the world of things and the world of persons, who have let it get out of control. Given a kind of demonic purpose of its own, detached from the effective world of persons, the world of things can only tear away and roll fearfully into the abyss, leaving what remains of humanity together in a new, personal, relationship. It seems to me that

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it is this personal relationship which is important, that the quick centre of living change is within the individual person, and is a matter of being, of growth. At any rate, it is obvious that in war time at least all political activity goes by the board. Those revolutionaries who have not joined in the general smash-up are left with nothing on their hands but themselves and their neighbours. If there is a new kind of life in this country after the war which is not totalitarian, it will, I think, be a life brought round to a new concreteness through a realisation of personal responsibility. The era of politics, when we could shelve our own personal problems, and feel righteous by trying to solve the problems of society, I feel, is over.

As I have not seen PARTISAN REVIEW for nearly two years, I do not know how you are responding to the situation, and I am eagerly waiting for my wife to bring back the copy she has recovered from Winchmore Hill. I suppose, in England, we are a bit nearer the focus of change than you in America. From what very little I know of America I gather the impression that the country is just being demoralised, as we were in the years before the war. But I am sure you are providing a centre of morality for the educated intelligence of America.

Kindest wishes, Yours,

D. S. SAVAGE

Nicholas Moore vs. George Orwell

Cambridge, England
August 25, 1941.

Sirs,

Apropos of your questionnaire and *Horizon's* questionnaire and the answer thereto. Firstly I'd like to say that I think the politics of your paper are far superior to *Horizon's*, and that that undoubtedly accounts in part, as you suggest, for the fact that your articles come out better than *Horizon's* and your stories and poems less well. The obviously amateurish politics of *Horizon* can scarcely appeal to any of the intellectuals who read it for its literature; for, apart from the fact that no doubt its politics as such are not those of its readers, the political articles compare very poorly in intelligence to those in the P.R.

This letter arises from your July-August issue, which I obtained through *Horizon*, and from the fact that I'm interested in (a) literature (especially poetry) and (b) politics (especially your kind: the partisan nature of your review gives it a value that *Horizon* cannot have). Considering the partisan nature of your politics I was very surprised to see that you had a London Letter from George Orwell, an omniverous and omniscient writer whom I greatly suspect. No doubt he writes well. He is extremely plausible, but are not his politics as much at variance with yours as are *Horizon's?* The impression that he gives in his London Let-

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ter is (though much better expressed) much the impression given by a sequence of *Horizon* editorials. He moves among *Tribune* circles, and the literary left, and you must know how irresponsible that literary left is: that had a pseudo-proletarian admiration for Moscow and social-realism, when it suited it, and, equally under pressure of war lined itself up with Churchill. What I am getting at is, frankly I don't think Orwell is in a position to know what serious writing is being done in this country at the moment: because the literary circle of which he is aware is the circle which grinds out highbrow pseudo-proletarian "kitsch." Once, it was communist. Now it is bourgeois pro-Churchill leftist. Nor does Orwell know very much about poetry, or, if he does, show any signs of it. In actual fact there is something of a post-poetic revival going on: admittedly subjective (if you like romantic), but not particularly escapist. Its organ, if any, is *Poetry* (London): its forerunners Dylan Thomas and George Barker. (That is not to say, of course, that it is derivative in technique or style, from them: but merely that its enthusiasm is.)

I would deny utterly Orwell's statement that "a belief in the unity of European civilization, and in international working-class solidarity" doesn't exist any longer. In the particularly Leftist group whose parties Orwell frequents, Fascism has killed it. That particular group happens to have a monopoly of the progressive literary press. New writing comes out in sixpenny penguins and sells like hot cakes. (Hot kitsch fresh from the fake-proletarian oven.) *Horizon* is the only extant (subsidized) purveyor of good writing. Politically it again reflects the defeatism of social-democracy and ex-communists. It probably shares Orwell's belief that "to be effectively anti-war in England now one has to be pro-Hitler." Are P.R. readers really expected to accept that?

I hope the P.R. continues to provide what America needs and what we here don't get. In my part of the world officers are still saluted in the street (pace George Orwell) and the big cafes have plenty of good food. For food for thought I think I shall have to rely on P.R., *Horizon* being a wet-blanket politically. I think you will be surprised in the "serious writing" that will arise from this England in this war.

Yours sincerely,
NICHOLAS MOORE

London, England
September 23, 1941.

Sirs:

When I said that the belief in international working class solidarity doesn't exist any longer, I was not thinking of what may or may not be said at the "parties" which Mr. Moore supposes I frequent. I was thinking of the history of Europe during the past ten years and the utter failure of the European working class to stand together in the face of Fascist

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aggression. The Spanish civil war went on for two and a half years, and during that time there was not one country in which the workers staged even a single strike in aid of their Spanish comrades. So far as I can get at the figures the British working class subscribed to various "aid Spain" funds about one per cent of what they spent during the same period in betting on football and horse-races. Anyone who actually talked to working men at the time knows that it was virtually impossible to get them to see that what happened in Spain concerned them in any way. Ditto with Austria, Manchuria, etc. During the past three months Germany has been at war with Russia and at the time of writing the Germans have overrun the greater part of the Russian industrial areas. If even the shadow of international working class solidarity existed, Stalin would only have to call on the German workers in the name of the Socialist Fatherland for the German war-effort to be sabotaged. Not only does nothing of the kind happen, but the Russians do not even issue any such appeal. They know it is useless. Until Hitler is defeated in the field he can count on the loyalty of his own working class and can even drag Hungarians, Rumanians and what-not after him. At present the world is atomised and no form of internationalism has any power or even much appeal. This may be painful to literary circles in Cambridge, but it is the fact.

"To be effectively anti-war in England now one has to be pro-Hitler." Of course this is so. Ask Stalin whether he wants us to be anti-war in England. Or on the other hand ask Hitler, whose radio praises so warmly the efforts of the PPU and (till recently) the People's Convention. It is a matter of ordinary common sense. If you hinder the war effort of your own side you automatically assist that of the enemy. See Lenin's remarks on the subject.

The rest of Mr. Moore's letter is froth. The attempted buildup of myself as a fashionable "bourgeois leftish" intellectual frequenting "*Tribune* circles" (whatever those may be) and generally saying whatever it pays to say at the moment is based on imagination. Mr. Moore has never seen me, knows nothing about me, who my friends are, what "circles" I frequent, what my income is, or how and where I came by my political opinions. I have no doubt that he did not count on your giving me a chance to reply. His motives for writing the letter are, I should say, tolerably obvious.

Yours,
GEORGE ORWELL

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Books

THE BURNHAMIAN REVOLUTION

Dwight Macdonald

JAMES BURNHAM'S BOOK* has sold around 10,000 copies, which is extremely good for a work of that kind; it has been reviewed seriously and sympathetically almost everywhere except in the Trotskyist press, which damned it with a sectarian obtuseness calculated to convince the outsider that it is a major work; a summary of its thesis has been printed in this very magazine. Yet I must confess that the considerable objections I had to the summary are tenfold magnified now that I have read the whole book. While we were in the Trotskyist movement together, I greatly admired Burnham for his courage, honesty and political intelligence. It is hard to say it, but these qualities seem largely absent from his book.

Even as an attempt to open up the field for discussion, the book seems of small value—and this despite my agreement with Burnham on the emergence of a new non-capitalist and non-socialist form of society. Burnham's methodology is so unscientific and the terms in which he argues his thesis are so vague, unhistorical and often self-contradictory, that it would take another book to correct errors of fact and to qualify, unravel and properly define his terms. And I can more easily swallow the Trotskyist theory that Hitler is a tool of big business, or Stalin a Bonapartist usurper in a "degenerated" workers' state, than accept Burnham's managers as the new ruling class.

The most striking feature about the book is the contrast between what its author *says* he is doing and what he actually does. He talks much of the scientific method, but, as will be seen shortly, makes no use of it. He rejects at length the concepts of 'orthodox' Marxism, yet his thesis is argued in the crudest sort of mechanical-Marxist terms, merely substituting the managers for the 16th century bourgeoisie as the new revolutionary force. He makes great professions of refraining from qualitative judgments, yet his book is the boldest attempt yet made to justify fascism in terms of materialistic progress. He disclaims the slightest programmatic aim, yet the chief virtue of his book—and the one which I think has made it a best-seller—is its persuasively (and, as will also be seen, quite deceptively) logical structure and its admirably clear expository style; it is the style and the structure not of a serious analyst grappling with the complexities of history but of a propagandist putting his message into the simplest, most effective form. As a propaganda tract, *The Managerial*

*_The Managerial Revolution_ (John Day, 285 pp., $2.50)

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Revolution is successful. As a serious study of, in the words of its modest subtitle, "What Is Happening in the World," it boils down to a number of broad statements organised into a plausible enough structure, but unsupported by data and floating in an ether of formal logic far above any historical context.

These are sweeping charges. I shall try to justify them.

In his letter in a recent issue, Victor Serge commented on Burnham's "sudden and amazing abandonment" of Marxism. The most extraordinary instance of this occurs on pages 44-5 of the book. Here Burnham states, without any qualifications, that (1) the fact that the revolution broke out first in the backward country of Russia was "contrary to the opinion of all socialist theoreticians prior to 1917," and (2) that once the revolution *had* taken place in Russia, "the leaders of the revolution itself" expected it to develop steadily towards socialism. That is really shameful! Leon Trotsky, Burnham's own leader and teacher for five years, in his long study, "Prospects of a Labor Dictatorship," written in 1906, argued in great detail against precisely these two conceptions.* The most charitable explanation is that Burnham is suffering from that "cultural amnesia" which Philip Rahv described in this magazine two years ago, a mental disease which has been spreading like wildfire among our intelligentsia since then, and in which the victim, as the result of some great shock, simply *cannot recall* the most elementary truths from his past experience.

THE METHOD Before examining Burnham's major thesis, I want to go into his method a bit, since it is in its method that I think the root of the book's failure lies. Burnham's procedure in this book seems to me to violate at least four requirements of a scientific approach in its field: precision and consistency in defining terms; the critical use of data; relation of concepts to a *historical* rather than a *formal-logical* context; caution in making sweeping claims and predictions.

There is a passage on p. 260 which shows up in concentrated form most of these methodological weaknesses. "In the 1936 elections," he writes, "probably three-quarters or more of the bona fide capitalists were against Roosevelt. In 1940 the figure must have been above 90%. . . . The simplest explanation which can cover the facts is here, as always, the best. This explanation is merely that the capitalists oppose the New Deal be-

*This is available in English in *Our Revolution* published by Holt in 1918. Relevant passages are: (1) "The industry of the United States is far more advanced than the industry of Russia, while the political role of the Russian workingmen, their influence on the political life of their country, the possibilities of their influence on world politics in the near future, are incomparably greater than those of the American proletariat. . . . You can reassure yourself by saying that social conditions in Russia are not yet ripe for a Socialist order, and you can overlook the fact that, once master of the situation, the workingclass would be compelled . . . to organize national economy under the management of the state." (2) "Without direct political aid from the European proletariat the workingclass of Russia will not be able to retain its power and to turn its temporary supremacy into a permanent Socialist dictatorship." Trotsky wrote this in 1906. I wonder how Burnham's book will read in 1952.

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cause they realize . . . that the New Deal is in direction and tendency anti-capitalist." (The New Deal is, according to Burnham, a "primitive" managerial system.) First, where do the figures "probably three-quarters" and "above 90%" come from? And what is a "bona fide" capitalist exactly? (Maybe it's a capitalist who votes against Roosevelt.) Next, granting for argument's sake the figures as correct and meaningful, is not Burnham's explanation much *too* simple (as are most of his explanations)? It is not even good formal logic: that capitalists oppose Roosevelt does not *of itself* —and Burnham rests his case wholly on the mere fact of opposition— show that the issue is capitalism. It is logically possible that the choice before the bourgeoisie in 1936 and 1940 was between two varieties of capitalism and that they voted for the more palatable variety. Historically, this happens frequently in politics. For many generations the bourgeoisie have united to fight against trade unions, which doesn't make unions any the less a part of the institutional structure of capitalism; similarly, the business community in the last three New York City elections has been solidly behind LaGuardia, without Tammany thereby becoming an 'anti-capitalist tendency.' Coming back to Burnham's point: is there any decisive difference between the 'anticapitalist tendencies' of the New Deal and those of much earlier analogous reformist tendencies in Europe, such as Bismarck's 'Prussian socialism' of the nineties and the Liberal-Labor upsurge in England led by Lloyd George just before the last war? If New Dealism is "primitive" managerialism, is not the Weimar Republic, which superimposed additional state controls on the already existing legacy of Bismarck, a much more mature type of *managerial* society? Thus we get the absurd result that the Nazis merely replaced one managerialism with another. Burnham naturally presents the Weimar-Nazi struggle as being between capitalism and managerialism, since the other presentation (which flows logically from his definition of the New Deal) would show that his concept of 'managerialism' has no historical meaning.

Burnham's semantic difficulties with the word "Marxist" are also worth a little attention. He insists on applying the term indiscriminately to all three existing Internationals, on the grounds that, since each claims to be the only "true" Marxist movement, all their claims must be disregarded and the term used for all of them. Again this violates formal logic, since the fact there is disagreement among the groups does not *of itself* prove that all three claims are equally valid (or invalid). Again it also is false historically, since the single term "Marxist" cannot sensibly be stretched to describe the behavior and beliefs of reformist socialists, Stalinist nationalists, and Trotskyite world revolutionaries. The advantage of Burnham's procedure, of course, is that *all* the defects of *all* the movements can be laid at the door of "Marxism," as when he calls the French Popular Front, "the last distorted partial upsurge of the Marxist parties." (Shades of Trotsky—and Daladier!) This satisfying procedure, however, threatens to get him into trouble later on when he comes to describe the Soviet Union as the "most mature" of existing managerial systems. For

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the natural question arises how Russia can be at once "managerial" and "Marxist," if Marxism is the historically outworn doctrine Burnham says it is. Burnham extricates himself with a completely bewildering distinction between socialist Marxism and non-socialist Marxism. He can then call Stalin a non-socialist Marxist (why not a managerial Marxist?). He takes care to make this distinction, whatever it means, only *after* he has run through his entire case against "Marxism" (including Stalin's non-socialist variety). Such are the refinements of the scientific method.

A few more examples of Burnham's methodology may be examined:

p. 35: The Nazi victory in the Saar plebescite is cited as a triumph of Nazi over bourgeois ideology. The same point is made later on. In neither place is it mentioned that the Saarlanders were *Germans* and that simple nationalism thus played an important role in the Nazi victory.

p. 189: The fact that the United States could not raise a mass army last year by voluntary enlistment and that conscription had to be used is cited to demonstrate the lack of popular appeal of bourgeois ideology today. (1) Bourgeois ideology certainly had plenty of appeal in the French revolutionary period, yet the armies that defended the Republic as well as Napoleon's armies were mostly raised by mass conscription (first introduced by the 1789 revolutionists, in fact). (2) The 1917 American army was also conscripted, although popular belief in democratic capitalism was much stronger then than it is today. (3) If conscription is a symptom of a dying ideology, how does Burnham explain its use by the managerial Hitler and Stalin?

p. 239: Burnham thinks it significant that managers are "seldom" found among the refugees from Germany. Does he possess figures for (a) the number of managers among the refugees, and (b) the numerical proportion of the managers to other groups inside Germany? If so, he doesn't give them.

p. 248: Burnham makes much of the ability to predict accurately as a touchstone of the validity of theories. As Victor Serge noted in the last issue, the Nazi attack on Russia exposes the oversimplification of his views on the Nazi-Soviet pact, and also makes hash of his prophecy that *first* the two managerial states would gang up on capitalist England, and *then*, with England smashed, would fight it out between them. Here he states: "By the end of 1940 it was clear that the focus of the war was shifting, that the result of the European struggle was in fundamentals decided, and that a new, third, phase was beginning. . . ." This phase was to be a world-struggle between Germany, Japan and the United States, with England practically knocked out. Instead we now have England stronger than ever and Germany at death grips with managerial Russia.

p. 268: Burnham cites as evidence of the managerial nature of the New Deal the fact that Baruch, the Wall Street speculator, ran the war economy of 1917, while Knudsen, the manager, runs (or ran) this one. Again Burnham has already been refuted: Knudsen has lost most of his powers precisely because he fol-

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lowed business-as-usual policies so faithfully as to reduce the production program to chaos, while Baruch is in the ascendant, working closely with the managerial Leon Henderson, who bases his price control policies on the experiences of Baruch's War Industries Board of 1917 and who differs from Baruch only in advocating a *less* drastic intervention of Government into the price field. Thus the capitalist Baruch advocates 'managerial' policies, while the 'manager' Knudsen remains true to capitalism.

THE THESIS

"I mean by managers," Burnham writes on p. 80, "those who already for the most part in contemporary society are actually managing, on the technical side, the actual process of production."* He lists some typical managerial occupations: " 'production managers', operating executives, superintendents, administrative engineers, supervisory technicians; or, in government . . . administrators, commissioners, bureau heads. . . ." He distinguishes them, in business, from the stockholders, the bankers, and those executives who are chiefly concerned with sales and profits; in government, likewise, managers are not to be confused with politicians. The operating heads of General Motors and T.V.A., for example, are managers, while Chairman Sloan of G.M. and President Roosevelt are not.

It is these managers, who "actually" and "in practice" run modern industry, that are the ruling class of the future. "This drive," pronounces Burnham, the scientific critic of Marxian inevitability, "will be successful." Parliaments are yielding to administrative bureaux as the loci of sovereignty, private capitalism to a managerially directed collectivised economy. The managers control modern industry as the bourgeoisie controlled their property in early capitalism, and the historical results will be analogous.

This is a very neat theory, especially satisfying if one's thinking is of the crude economic-determinist variety which Burnham and myself, in the Trotskyist movement, used to call "mechanical Marxism." But it is not difficult to show that it is not the managers, but the politicians, who are and will remain—barring socialist revolution—the new ruling class. The distinction between those who determine policies (*what* is to be done) and those who carry them out (*how* it is to be done) would seem elementary. Burnham himself makes it when he excludes from the managerial category chemists, physicists, non-executive engineers and similar highly trained professionals because, while they exercise a technical skill necessary to the productive process, "they have no functions of guiding, administering, managing, organizing the process of production," that is, they exercise their skill only within the limits of a general policy handed down to them by the managers. Carry the distinction one step higher, and what are the

*Aspiring propagandists should note, by the way, how frequently such expressions as "actually," "really," "in practice" and "in fact" crop up in this work—a note of pragmatic reassurance which is especially attractive to the American bent of mind.

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managers but skilled technicians carrying out policies determined by the political leaders? Just as it has never been any problem for the managers to get plenty of competent (and tractable) professional technicians to run their plants, so neither the bourgeoisie nor the dictators have any trouble getting competent and tractable managers to run their economy.

Logically fallacious, Burnham's thesis is also historically baseless. Although he frequently claims that the revolution he describes has already taken place to a large degree, he mentions only one specimen of a manager in the whole book (poor old Bill Knudsen!) and not a single managerial party, program, or even group. He has absolutely no data on the actual position of managers in Germany and Russia. For the embarrassing fact is that in those full-fledged "managerial" systems, the managers are considerably *less* powerful than in an advanced capitalist country like the United States. In this country, the well-known inability of the stockholders to control the modern big corporation gives a certain autonomous power to the management. But Stalin and Hitler are no absentee owners; they are on the necks—often literally—of the harassed managers every minute and they have perfected a minute and all-embracing political control of the whole economy.*

Burnham's main arguments (and their rebuttals) may be summarized as follows:

(1) "As a *group*, the managers probably already receive much more income than the remaining capitalists [in Italy and Germany] and of course much more relative to their numbers than any other section of the population including the 'political bureaucrats.'" Since he has not defined the term, "political bureaucrats," which might mean the millions of lesser state and party officials or might mean only the few thousand tops, this statement is meaningless. Even if he defined his terms, no statistics exist to prove or disprove the statement. And even if the point could be proved, it would not even demonstrate that the managers are a class, let alone a ruling class.

(2) "In both Germany and Russia the managers decide in practice who shall be denied access to a factory. . . ." Thus the shop foremen over here are the ruling class since it is they (and not the owners, nor even the executives) who decide "in practice" who gets into the plant. (The real question is: who decides it "in theory"?)

(3) With the objectivity of the true scientist, Burnham admits that "the GPU or the Gestapo may oust a manager from his

*A current study, for example, gives as a major cause of the overexpansion, relative to the market, of the German industrial plant in the twenties: "the supremacy of technicians over economists, with the result that technical rationalization was carried out according to the wishes of the former without regard to economic considerations." (*Regulation of Economic Activities in Foreign Countries*, Monograph No. 40 of the Temporary National Economic Committee, p. 55.) That is, the bourgeoisie of the Weimar period were unable to control their managers within the limits of capitalist economics. Can one imagine Hitler allowing such independence to *his* managers?

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position and send him to execution or a concentration camp." "But," he adds, "relatively speaking, such cases, though conspicuous, do not happen so very frequently." (Relative to what? How often is frequently? Apparently more often than this happened in the Soviet purges of 1936-8.) "And even more important," concludes Burnham solemnly, "though the individual manager may be removed, it is not a soldier or a policeman but *another manager* who takes his place." The individual American worker may be fired, but he is replaced not by a soldier, not by a policeman, not by an astronomer, not by a saxophonist, but by . . . *another workman!* He is furthermore "essential to the productive process." Conclusion: the U.S.A. is a workers' state.

(4) Just as the absolute monarchs of the 17th and 18th centuries (to whom Burnham compares the modern dictators) were dependent on the rising bourgeoisie for money to run the state, so the dictators are dependent on the managers for the goods to run their social system and to wage war, since ("in practice," of course) these goods "can be assured only through their collaborating with, and in the end subordinating themselves to, those who are actually directing the processes of production, to the managers. The sources of wealth and power are the basic instruments of production; these are to be directed by the managers; and the managers are, then, to be the ruling class." I have already dealt with the theoretical misconception here, which stems from the failure to distinguish between determining *what* is to be produced, and determining *how* it is to be produced. The historical parallel (which recurs throughout the book) is also baseless for the same reason: the bourgeois market system determined *what* was to be produced; the managerial system determines merely *how*, and the all-important *what* is strictly the province of the political bureaucracies. Elsewhere Burnham correctly states that the managers and the politicians have "coalesced." But the absolute monarchs and the early bourgeoisie were far from coalesced; the monarch played off the two powerful social classes of the time, the bourgeoisie and the feudal nobility, against each other in Bonapartist fashion. The "coalition" Burnham notes between dictators and managers is simply the subordination of the latter to the former; the politicos, for example, do not play off the managers against the bourgeoisie, because the managers have no basis of class power and are not, in fact, a class at all.

THE MEANING

The most significant passage in the book is perhaps the following (pp. 155-7):

How will it be in the new society? Will it be the managers or the political bureaucrats who are the ruling class? In the first

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> place, we may observe that it really doesn't make much difference which of the two groups is to be correctly regarded as the new ruling class. . . . In either case, the general structural and institutional organization will be the same. . . . To say that the ruling class is the managers is almost the same thing as to say that it is the state bureaucracy. The two have, by and large, coalesced.

In a few casual words, Burnham blows up the foundation of his elaborately constructed thesis. But—and this is the important point—*he himself is not aware of this because he is not aware of any significant difference between the political and the managerial bureaucracies.* This he makes clear when he writes (pp. 156-8):

> Modern politicians—that is, politicians of the types found in the present Russian and German regimes . . .—are in reality not unlike modern managers. They direct masses of people in ways analogous to those used by managers in directing production; they have similar habits of thought, similar methods. . . . [There are] moral prejudices against regarding war and propaganda and diplomacy and policing as 'economically productive' processes; though, in a complex society, above all in a society so integrated as under a managerial structure, no clear line can be drawn between them and the remainder of the economy. Armies and police forces and courts and fireside chats and prisons can be looked on as among the means whereby society produces goods. . . .

It is not difficult to show that this conception conflicts fatally with his previous contention that the managers, not the politicos, are the ruling class because it is the former who "in practice" direct the productive forces. For if a war is to be considered an economic process, it clearly dominates any conceivable managerial field, and if Hitler and Stalin are also managers, they are so by virtue of their control of the State power, which determines *for what end* the economic machinery is to be set in motion. But I am interested in these passages less for the additional flaws they expose in Burnham's thesis—there's really no end to such openings! —but rather for what they tell us about the *meaning* of the thesis.

The dangerous thing about *The Managerial Revolution* is that its author *assumes* his most important premise, the identity of managers and politicos (the two passages just quoted are almost all he has on this crucial point). Having assumed this, *Burnham presents his thesis almost exclusively in managerial terms* (a strategy which in itself suggests the falsity of his primary identification of managers with politicos). Thus while he defines very closely just what he means by a manager—the one serious slip into scientific method, in fact, in an otherwise admirable job of special pleading—he nowhere defines even approximately what he means by a political bureaucrat. And why does he call it the *managerial* revolution if the new ruling class also includes the politicians? As Burnham states himself, "the name given to the theory . . . is not unimportant."

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For "managerial" to the American reader (and, I suspect, to Burnham himself) has good connotations ("production," "efficiency") while "bureaucratic" or "political" have bad connotations ("war," "class conflict," "dictatorship"). Our detached scientist has thus loaded the semantic dice before the game begins. Furthermore, though he nowhere describes the social outlook of the dictators, he has at least two very soothing descriptions of how their alleged co-rulers, the managers, look at things: "The managers tend to think of solving social and political problems as they coordinate and organize the actual process of production." And again: "Society can be run, they think, in more or less the same way that now they, when they are allowed, can run, efficiently and productively, a mass-production factory." A cursory acquaintance with the literature of technocracy and the public utterances of managers like Tugwell, Kettering and Henry Ford confirms the accuracy of this description. But this is not the way Hitler or Roosevelt approach such matters. It is rather the approach whose theoretical organ is *Common Sense* and whose practitioners include the early New Deal "planners" (Berle, Tugwell, Frank, Coyle) and, at the other end of the political spectrum, Herbert Hoover, "the Engineer in the White House," and the quasi-fascistic ideas of Henry Ford. But, as Hoover found out in a most spectacular way, political problems do not yield to such an approach because their factors (not the least important being the class struggle) are quite different from those involved in running a mass-production factory.

The nature of Burnham's approach, and the main reason for its popular vogue, should now be clear. He has combined the Marxist concept of a revolutionary new class based on an economically progressive reorganization of the productive forces and invested with the mystic aura of historical inevitability, with the technocratic-"planning" illusion of solving society's problems the way engineers solve the problems involved in building a bridge. He has used both concepts, especially the Marxist, at their crudest (and most propagandistically effective) level. The result is something we have already seen coming into existence abroad in the conquered nations, in the pro-fascist propaganda of such former Marxist leaders as Deat and Henri De Man, but which has not hitherto appeared over here. As expounded in his book, Burnham's thesis seems to me to create at least three highly dangerous illusions: (1) by presenting the "new order" in specifically managerial-productive terms and playing down the role of the dictators, it makes it appear desirable from the standpoint of materialistic progress; (2) it greatly exaggerates the strength, the internal consistency, and the conscious planning of these totalitarian systems; (3) by presenting fascism as historically inevitable with a finality which would have shocked Marx, and by underestimating the subjective, I venture even to say the *moral*, factors working on the other side, Burnham's theory paralyzes the will to fight for a more desirable alternative.

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THE COLOSSUS OF MAROUSSI. By Henry Miller. The Colt Press, San Francisco. $3.50; limited signed $6.00.

The Colt Press has done a beautiful job on this book: fine binding, elegant (i.e. unobtrusive) type; and a jacket that dawns on one after a while, blue, white and violent, like Henry Miller's Greece. Colt has done well, moreover, to print Miller, who is important as a prose-writer and (though he makes a great to-do about hating America) as a thoroughly American case.

"Thus Homer lives on. Though I've never read a line of Homer I believe the Greek of today is essentially unchanged. If anything he is more Greek than he ever was." And thus Miller lives on (etc.). He goes to Greece on the eve of the war, determined to find it miraculous, for he *believes*—on page 84—in living miraculously. He wanders idyllically from Delphi to Knossus, bestowing on each a spiritual orgasm. "At Mycenae I walked over the incandescent dead; at Epidaurus I felt a stillness so intense that for a fraction of a second I heard the great heart of the world beat and I understood the meaning of pain and sorrow." Above all he meets the Colossus, Katsimbalis, who comes through to us in loving luminous prose, a magnificent figure. (The most obvious point about Miller's prose, by the way, is that "the meaning of pain and sorrow" remains bloated and diffuse, like Nashe or Greene throwing a sop to the censor. But if it's the body of a peasant woman, a storm at sea, or a man named Katsimbalis, the writing tightens up, at once passionate and firm, charged with a desperate effort to get at something not REAL or COSMIC but simply real, intensely realized—like Nashe again.) Now all this is very festive. Greece is the "carrefour of changing humanity," and Miller has his genial finger on "the schism between the human and the divine." (Alas! with his finger on real schisms Miller has a certain obscene power, but this metaphysical one stretches over pages and pages, arid and empty as a desert.) In Athens he visits an Armenian soothsayer who confirms an old suspicion: that he, Miller, is destined to live forever. And he caps his rendition of this scene with the remark that he felt "chastened," filled with a "great sense of responsibility." Is this the change of heart so hopefully announced by Edmund Wilson some months ago? Don't believe it. Miller seduces no Greeks, steals no silver, expresses the "desire to serve humanity in the highest possible way." And since it costs him nothing he gives more than we ever asked for: "I know now what the world is and knowing I accept it, both the good and evil." But he's no less Miller than he ever was.

It is not simply that he still finds "contradictoriness, confusion, chaos —all sterling human qualities" (p. 6), that he is still infuriated by Logic, Progress, the Machine, nor even that he has not ceased to look forward with impatience to "the inevitable destruction of our present civilisation." To slip from one term to the other of the reject-accept dichotomy requires no essential change in Miller, because the dichotomy is verbal, unreal, used only to splash his canvas with the crude tones of love or hatred. His

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"thought" is all posture and froth, without significance or coherence except insofar as it furnishes a kind of parallel (who can say cause or effect?) to his final failure as an artist. For, among his prized confusions, that between art and "self-expression" is fundamental and abiding. And it is the perpetual anarchic spilling of seed on the ground (not the actual content of his ideas) which sends him off to limbo.

H. J. KAPLAN

LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN. By James Agee and Walker Evans Houghton, Mifflin. $3.00

This remarkable book began as a journalistic assignment "of" sharecroppers, but the editors did not reckon with their men, and the result is a serious effort to present three Alabama families and their little houses in their inner humanity and divinity on the rolling world. Agee's subjective sobriety is deeper than could be imagined, and perhaps the best portions of the work are those very ones in which he describes his misgivings at being a spy and a stranger, his refusal to submit to the categories of sociology or the devices of drama, and (to my mind a place of intense beauty) the description of his guilty joy as he fine-combs the house when the family is away.

Of the farmers, very little reality is conveyed, but there is a striking presentation of Agee himself. In rejecting the ordinary frames of explanation, he falls back on his immediate awareness and a passionate desire, and occasional sentiment, of being "with" or even "in" his subjects. At the same time, he seems to know himself not at all—but just the feeling of his anxiety and longing—so that he is always reading into their situation his own qualities, frailties, and often prejudices. Sometimes this is done with insufferable arrogance, as when he feels, on the briefest acquaintance, that a girl is going off to a marriage of misery.

He speaks always as if there were a norm of virtue and happiness: he is too modest to think this out: he continually feels and judges on the basis of it: and he occasionally explains that being as such is a disease.

Obviously, whether conscious or not, to present one's-self thru objective descriptions is a good method; but when Agee raises his art to the level of theory, which requires understanding, he is far off. His passages on the poetics of what he is doing are confusion, and he seems not to realize that many other writers, faced with the white page and their past and immediate experience, also ask what they are about, and that there are several ways to go from there. When his scrupulousness is raised to theory, he is for all the world like the girl who tries for the prize for Conspicuous Modesty. Above all, till he acquires the gift of objective personal intuition, he should shun like the plague the matter of educational psychology.

What is surprising to me is that a writer so conscious and ashamed of his "own kind" (journalist, Harvard, urban, etc.) is so unable to shake all that off, to treat it ironically, or with scientific heat.

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On a point of technique: altho the division of the work into sections on Shelter, Clothing, Education, Work, etc. is reasonable, I do not see why it would be less true or more "artistic" to present the subject prior to this analysis, concretely functioning with them all. And especially, in place of the lists of items that Agee gives us, must we not return again and again to Lessing's remark on Homer: he shows us the dress of Agamemnon when Agamemnon is putting it on. As a critic of architecture I am simply flabbergasted by the sentence "Since a house is so entirely static a subject, the presenting of it may be slow going."

Many of the items, for instance the oil-lamp or the overalls, are presented with extraordinary beauty and power and a kind of isolated truth. The observation of the style, surface, and matter of things, not people, is sensitive often to the point of genius. The sense of their proportions, tradition, and social tone is more feeble.

In this brief notice I must culpably omit any mention of the effects of Agee's singular prose, and the least mention of Evans' marvelous photographs. PAUL GOODMAN

BETWEEN THE ACTS. By Virginia Woolf. Harcourt, Brace. $2.50

"She was given to increasing the bounds of the moment by flights into the past and future . . ."

Like Mrs. Swithin in *Between the Acts*, Virginia Woolf stretched Time both ways—and up and down. She surrounded her characters with an expanse of duration which they could never hope to fill with their acts. So much Time did Mrs. Dalloway, for instance, have on her hands that scores of pages were needed to tell of it, while the lady herself was merely crossing a room.

Outside the courses of personal Time, Mrs. Woolf found others, and one of these was History. In the midst of Time-the-fog, the Time of "Nature" that spreads its dank aging around the living-room and lawn furniture, marches Time-the-pageant, that simplification created when individuals merge their moments together to make a group Time: a "life of the times," a *Period*.

Between the Acts is a story about thinking of Britain as a continuing unit, a story of an effort to bring the history of England to life through recollection and play-acting, and through putting on the stage those who represent its past and lay claim to its present. Like its title, the book touches many surfaces of meaning; but again and again, on one level after another, it repeats the question: Is anything left?

During a perfect summer's day in June 1939, a village pageant is produced at a "middle-sized house," solid and respectably old. The members of the family and their servants and acquaintances wait for the show, each hanging at different altitudes from his enlarged moments, as from colored balloons. Mrs. Woolf's scene-painting is most exquisite and firm in this last work, fruit of one of the finest styles in modern English prose. Time, or rather times, was her technical medium, as well as her subject:

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she handled it like a palette of washes: grey for Mrs. Swithin's readings in the *Outline of History;* green and azure for "the view" (which is "so sad" because "it'll be there when we're not"); pink splashes for Mrs. Manresa, "nothing like so grown up as you are."

The audience does not understand the pageant very well. It is even impossible at times to catch the words sung by the villagers as they pass in and out among the trees. "Scenes from English history" is about all anyone can make of it: "Merry England"—at the thought Mrs. Manresa "clapped energetically." Though one lady inquires, "Why leave out the Army if it's history?"

The pageant itself, put on in a way that often reminded me of Gertrude Stein's *Four Saints,* parodies the great periods in English literature. Miss LaTrobe, author and director, hovers off stage, straining to see the flame of vision lighted by these august memories. Of course, the play is a failure. There are a few who wonder about its "message;" others to whom the affair is simply an annual event—these talk about the weather. Miss LaTrobe cannot hold them together, for it is as "scraps and fragments" that they see themselves when the actors turn mirrors on them at the close of the play. But "there is death, death, death, when illusion fails." So the phonograph in the bushes creaks its *leitmotif: Dispersed are we, Dispersed are we,* while the aeroplanes pass overhead.

In our day, the historical pageant has taken on a new, ominous significance, as the rulers of the present seek to give power and content to their acts by dressing them in the costumes of the past. *Between the Acts* is a genuine poem, witty, skeptical and laden with sorrow, on a theme chosen with genius.

HAROLD ROSENBERG

AWAKE! AND OTHER POEMS. By W. R. Rodgers. London: Secker & Warburg. 5 S/.

W. R. Rodgers is a young Irish poet whose work has appeared in English magazines and, recently, in PARTISAN REVIEW. His English publishers tell us that the entire first edition of the present book was "destroyed by enemy action." And this seems an appropriate misfortune, for Rodgers' verse is wholly Crisis-begotten and wholly catastrophic in feeling. Indeed both technically and in spirit he carries on the kind of poetry written by Auden, Spender and Lewis about 1934: the violent alliterative effects, startling juxtapositions, insistent concreteness, warnings, exhortations, pictures of disaster in the present, dreams of future peace and delight. In imitating the older poets, however, Rodgers necessarily caricatures them; and much of his work so far is spoiled by extravagance, automatic brilliance, and lack of personality. Yet his very considerable talent is always appearing in some well executed and freshly inspired detail:

There in the hard light
Dark birds, pink-footed, dab and pick
Among the addery roots and arrowy stones . . .

F. W. DUPEE

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GREAT SOLDIERS OF THE TWO WORLD WARS. By H. A. de Weerd. W. W. Norton. $3.00.

Though not free from the usual shortcomings of its type, this popular book is more than a mere biographical account of the military heroes who rose to fame during the last thirty years. The twelve "portraits" are so arranged as to cover nearly all important events of the two wars and all major contributions to military thought.

There is a remarkable freedom in the selection of the representative figures. It was a splendid idea to begin the list of the "great soldiers of the two world wars" with the name of Schlieffen. The disciple of Clausewitz and creator of the famous Schlieffen-plan which, if it had been courageously adhered to, might have saved the German armies from defeat at the Marne in 1914, and which had not outlived its utility when it was followed, with an important modification, by Hitler's armies in 1940, was indeed "in a very real sense" a soldier of the two wars although he died one year before the first world war began. While some names (Foch, Haig, Ludendorff) have been omitted for external reasons, the list otherwise includes all who participated in the shaping of the present style of warfare—Hindenburg and Hoffmann, Kitchener and Lawrence, Pétain and Gamelin, Pershing, Seeckt and Wavell, Churchill and Hitler.

Although the emphasis is on hero-worship rather than on "debunking," the misery of the lives of the great soldiers is revealed along with their splendor. There are few among them who would not have preferred, at one or another occasion, the defeat of their own country to the triumph of a rival. Nor is it sufficient to dismiss those petty quarrels as merely personal. They often expressed conflicting political and social tendencies, just as the famous "pessimism" of Marshal Pétain and his constant quarrels with the (democratic!) "politicians" during the first world war foreshadowed his pro-fascist activities of 1939-1941. Even more strikingly appears the intimate connection of war and politics in the strangely analogous careers of the two "statesmen-soldiers," Churchill and Hitler. Both acquired their present effectiveness in war through an extension into the realm of force of their life-long political struggles. There was no need for the author, who is fully aware of this real source of Hitler's present soldierly achievements, to fall for the fantastic tales told by Rauschning in 1941 about the "blueprints of the coming war" that were allegedly outlined by Hitler to a group of young Nazis as early as 1932. In so far as it is not merely the application of a highly developed material equipment the whole "unorthodox" Hitlerian technique of breaking down an enemy is based on the transfer of the methods of civil war to a war against outside enemies.

KARL KORSCH

SO IT DOESN'T WHISTLE. By Robert Paul Smith. Harcourt, Brace. $2.50.

Mr. Robert Paul Smith, the most recent (as we go to press) of the sentimentally visceral and isn't-Bix-wonderful school of novelists, looks remarkably like another Boy in the Back Room. *So It Doesn't Whistle* is

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a short, but overlong, book of nostalgic intent, with its lack of focus trained on four young men in New York—a writer-producer in radio, another writer, a dance-band musician, and a painter—their girls and other acquaintances. I suppose that Mr. Smith is an experimental writer of sorts: he has not only dispensed with dramatic progression, but characterization and motivation as well. Once again we are among old, not to say moth-eaten, friends: the hero who talks tough but can break down and cry like a child, the beautiful girls who jump into bed with the gayest alacrity and willingness, the happy musicians with their marijuana, the Broadway hearts-of-gold. And certainly never before has the word "fine" been used, in a 1925 Hemingway sense, with such zest and frequency.

The early hard-boiled novel depended for much of its effectiveness on shrewd pacing, staccato narrative drive, careful plotting; its heroes were heartless—gunmen, bootleggers, enemies of society. Cain's postman and the novels of W. R. Burnett formed an orbit around which their successors carefully swung. The latter-day type, of which Mr. Smith's book is a reprehensible and conspicuous example, is plotless, indirect, and written in a sluggish, padded prose that derives limply from Dorothy Baker and Otis Ferguson. Its heroes are witless and passive, softer-boiled; they behave in what appears to be a return to a quasi-*This Side of Paradise* manner. They approve of Lionel Hampton and denigrate T. S. Eliot, and their vulgarity almost eclipses Mr. Smith's: "So we tried talking in complete sentences, we stuck our necks out and liked Van Gogh even if it *was* stylish to like him, we had read the little magazines once upon a time, we knew that James Joyce was a giant on this earth."

But let us be fair to our author. Let us look at the other side. The Boston *Herald,* in its review, mentions Kafka and says that Mr. Smith has "got something." (As specified, this is quite undeniable.) Miss Kay Boyle remarks that the book is "touchingly pure . . . the very highest praise." Otis Ferguson adds that it is "the best of its kind since that particular mood appeared in the early Hemingway." Yet to this reviewer it seems merely shoddily pubescent, and its author a writer fully competent of outdoing even the chronicler of the Beautiful People in brashness, vulgarity, and collegiate bounce. He whistles too loud. WELDON KEES

A Communication

Sirs:

Philip Rahv's article, "10 Propositions and 8 Errors," expresses the disillusionment of many American intellectuals with the prospects of socialism and the strength of the workingclass abroad. Everywhere one runs into these self-styled "realists," who put on a very sceptical air and insist that, since there are no newspaper headlines about workingclass activity abroad, none exists. These "realists" seem to me as blind to future possibilities as their colleagues of twenty years ago were. Real insight into the making of history can only be grasped through a historical, i.e., a

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dialectical approach, one which supplements the immediate empirical analysis with some understanding of historical processes. As one who was in France through the fall of this year, I should like to indicate my reasons for believing that the European workingclass is already stirring and that Hitler's "New Order" is much less stable than the common-sense "realists" think it is.

The first reactions of the French workers to the 1940 defeat are well known: disgust with their old leaders and parties, a certain friendliness towards the German army because of its unexpectedly "correct" behavior, and a sneaking admiration for the organizing talent and general efficiency of the Germans. This soon yielded, however, as is also well known, to a growing resentment against the ever-increasing plundering which the Nazis had to impose on conquered France. Early in 1941, the Stalinists, who in the first months of defeat had refrained from attacking the Germans, began to change their policy—either because they realized they would lose all influence if they didn't, or because Stalin already foresaw the coming clash with the Nazis, or perhaps both. Their activities grew tremendously, thousands were arrested, but thousands more filled up their place.

Another factor which overcame the apathy of the early months was the fact that the factories began to work again. Workers who had been sitting around without any contact with their fellow workers became "socialized" again, so to speak, and began to think in terms of collective action and class solidarity. The younger workers were especially active. Most of them were Stalinists—unhappily, the C.P. is, as yet, the only mass organization now existing among the French workers—but they seemed much less traditional-minded than the older generation of Stalinists, much less docile towards the top bureaucracy. I have frequently heard such young Stalinist workers discuss politics with oppositional leftwingers, even with Trotskyists!

Some life began to appear also in the trade unions—though I don't think the unions will play an important part in the fight to come, illegal activity being channelled largely through factory or party groups. Those unions whose leadership was for outright collaboration with the Nazis lost most of their membership, while those which kept some independence retained their members. Thus the metalworkers fell to 8,000, while the railwaymen, pursuing an anti-collaborationist policy, still have some 50,000 members.

But the most significant single event up to the time I left was the general strike in the coal mines of the North, which took place at the end of May, about the same time as the big miners' strike in Belgium. This was not Communist-inspired, the Stalinists never having had much strength in this region. It was a spontaneous movement of the workers against the Nazis, and that, too, in a district which is under much stricter military control than most of France. Despite the enormous German pressure, it lasted some three weeks.

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The Petain regime has tried to win over the workers, but with no success. The trade union leaders who "rallied" to Petain are even less popular with the workers than are the other Petainards. Recently, partly because of their ineffectiveness, partly because of the ever more reactionary trend of the Petain regime, these turncoats have been threatened with elimination from the State payroll. "We have abandoned internationalism and socialism," they lament in their press, "and still you don't trust us."

Despite clever propaganda, the Nazis have been equally unsuccessful with the workers. "A united states of Europe?" the workers say, "All very nice—but meantime they take our food and keep our prisoners!" The English propaganda is much better received, simply because England is fighting the hated Nazis. But there is a widespread scepticism as to England's war aims: "They're fighting Germany—O.K. But they're pretty imperialist themselves, they too want to dominate the world"—this is the usual reaction.

Finally, there is the crucial matter of the attitude of the German soldiers themselves. There is little hope for a successful revolutionary movement against German occupation without at least the neutrality of large sections of the German soldiery. In the first year of occupation, the French workers felt and expressed simply a hatred of all German soldiers alike, and the Germans in return felt utterly isolated. But a significant change seems to be taking place. German soldiers have come into contact, as foremen or as fellow workers, with French workers in certain war plants. Technical knowledge is compared, the French begin to feel that after all the German is a worker too, and that "it's not his fault." I recall one instance, when a German noncommissioned officer, in charge of a Paris garage for staff cars, became impatient with the efforts of the French mechanics to fix a car and, peeling off his military jacket, climbed under the car and soon found the trouble. Relations henceforth in that shop were on a completely different basis. I know personally of several instances when a German soldier who had been working in some Paris plant, was ordered to the Eastern front—and was tearfully bid goodbye by his French fellow workers. "He's a poor devil, a worker like us. It's not *his* fault."

War weariness is by now general among the occupying troops. "I'm not a soldier, I'm a tailor," said one of them impatiently to a friend of mine. But of course neither the British nor the DeGaulle propaganda can take any advantage of this feeling, since it speaks entirely in terms of inflicting an even more terrible fate on Germany this time than last. "We don't want a new Versailles"—this sentiment is what keeps most of the Nazi soldiery loyal to the Fuhrer, not any dreams of world empire. In short, the kind of propaganda which can reach both the French people and the rank and file of their German military oppressors, must speak the language of workingclass internationalism rather than of British imperialism or DeGaullist nationalism.

LOUIS CLAIR

NEW YORK CITY

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Letters

A LETTER FROM BEN NICHOLSON

Dear George Morris:

It was very nice getting your article and reading how you make your paintings. It is, isn't it, a bit of a mystery how other painters make their paintings —I expect you thought my naturalistic approach a bit mysterious? I wondered how much our two articles* might overlap—but not much, it seemed. Gabo and Barbara Hepworth both liked yours very much. I enjoyed the orange story, which was new to me—but if only dear old Kandinsky had been able to make his circles as quiet as an orange. (Wallis is a good case of a painter utilizing a strange-shaped board as the key to the movement in his painting.) Yes *indeed* paintings using representational forms can be *expressive!* The objectors to abstract art so often say that representation adds "that much more" which indeed it does (and loses something as well) and makes it a different kind of art. Just because painting *can* be more naturalistic than music why should they deny the profound possibilities of 'abstract' expression in painting, which are no less profound, presumably, than in music? The influences of pornography in art seem to me unsatisfactory, as ideas of this kind give no solution and do not endure. (I much prefer Arp's collages and reliefs to his more recent sculptures.) The Hartung you reproduced looks well and for me makes the Gonzalez look a bit superficial and "decorative." Of your 3 examples it is No. 3 I like best and it looks very nice—I would like to see the original with its colour, which I cannot guess. . . . I had to go up to London early in Oct. on account of some business which kept me there a month—an absolutely blissful month after two years and two such years—to see all one's friends and London was a pleasure indeed. . . . By now every one is flat-out and things are pretty difficult—however we do still manage to get some "work" done—how long we shall be able to I don't know. Mothers with 14 children seem to get called up and old boys with immensely long beards—on the other hand if you're a plumber, you're reserved at 25. . . .

BEN NICHOLSON

ST. IVES, CORNWALL ENGLAND

*Ben Nicholson's "Notes on Abstract Art" appeared in the October number of *Horizon*.

LETTER FROM THE ARMY

Sirs:

This is a twofold letter which makes it at once an economical one and one which I have to write in spite of my military lassitude.

First, since I am a new subscriber, I want to add my own to the welter of opinions you have received on the REVIEW.

1. You are to be congratulated on the magazine's 'tone.' It does, as you say, have a "definite editorial character." And that is good; you have no reason to relax your standards. In fact, a little more maturity rather than less should be your aim.

2. But there is one danger in this refusing to talk down to your readers. Often you talk above your own heads. A good example of this is the article on D. W Griffith in the May-June issue.

3. There is a nasty streak in some of your articles, a puerility which cannot be quite defined. The article on Jules Romains is an example of this tone which I can only call snide. Also the literary gossip column retailed by Victor Serge. These would be bad in any language.

4. Many of your contributors seem afflicted with a kind of cosmopolitan provinciality. The stories of McCarthy and Goodman in the last two issues are cases in point. They are drawn from an infinitely small class experience and they use for their mechanics certain pleasant conceptions (such as the castration complex) current among this class. They are, in fact, trade stories, proper for trade journals—which may or may not describe the PARTISAN REVIEW. The Goodman story is extremely interesting since it combines a self-corrosive irony with the kind of wishful thinking which sees sex as a solution of a political problem.

5. This same kind of irony and ingenuousness characterises your political articles. Your discussions of "The Managerial Revolution" were excellent (ex-

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cept, of course, for Mr. Mattick's unreadable article which should have been left in the original German) but the "Ten Propositions" were exasperating. I agree with all your despairs but your hopes seem chimerical. The falseness is the same as in the "Facts of Life": you know that we have been sterilized but your wishes tell you that we are still potent.

6. Whatever your readers may say, your poetry remains one of the high points of PARTISAN REVIEW. The Eliot is as fine as any since "The Hollow Men." The Auden ("At the Tomb of Henry James") was good if uneven. Certainly it is above most of his recent products. At its worst your poetry is precious — as in David Schubert's "Simple Scale." But even in preciosity you may find something ornate and fine like the Moore poem in your July-August issue.

7. Your reportage from France and the article by George Orwell are excellent. These and the articles on Art represent the best of your prose.

Then I want to say something about the Army, prompted principally by Pvt. Shapiro's letter in the September-October issue.

The Army is quite liveable. The food is edible. A normal person can sleep in the beds, and the work is non-existent. The claims of the Government about good treatment are *not* "substantially true." They are pure fantasy. But they are not objectionable since they are one of the things which make Army life so amusing. The men in the Army are not intelligent in the genre of the PARTISAN REVIEW but they are all amiable companions. They have to be since we live so closely one upon the other.

The prime characteristic of the Army is its pure uselessness. Since it has been an institution without duties in a peacetime nation for the last twenty years it has developed some rather natural traits. Like religion in an apostate age it has substituted ritual for duty, ceremonial works for patriotic faith. Now when we are supposed to be preparing for a highly technical war it is still concentrating on the trivialities of inspections, military courtesy, retreat parades and so on. The chief virtue of the good soldier is that he is inconspicuously idle or engaged in conspicuous waste.

This "made work" is the chief deterrent to military morale. Otherwise the Army knows how to handle its men. Like the rulers of Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" they have their soma (equals 3.2 beer, movies, a library full of Western stories, and regular chow) which keeps men in the mass contented by not recognizing them as individuals.

Yours,

FORT LEWIS, WASH. PRIVATE Z

IN BRIEF

I enjoy the magazine immensely, and find it the one remaining source of progressive artistic and political thought. The revolting spectacle of the "liberals" and their weeklies makes PARTISAN REVIEW a necessary antidote to the almost universal falseness of American periodicals. — ROBERT M. PALMER, LAURENCE, KANSAS.

And may I add parenthetically that I think PR is doing a first-rate job, even if I don't always agree with its social program.—CONRAD AIKEN, BREWSTER, MASS.

Your magazine is refreshing, reassuring and stimulating in these days of total assent to total war. Auden's Henry James poem, and Rodgers in last issue were first rate and some of the most interesting poetry you have published. Good luck. You'll need it before long if we continue, politically, in our present direction.— E. P., FAIRFAX, CALIF.

PARTISAN REVIEW continues to be the most stimulating magazine on the market; not (for me) because of its political philosophy, but because it is the one contemporary publication which is consistently cultivated and serious-minded. Thanks especially for Mr. Rahv's extraordinarily fine essays. May subscriptions keep mounting.—D. P., NEW YORK CITY.

May I say how much I appreciated the PARTISAN REVIEW during the last year and especially since being in the Army? —XYZ, CAMP CROFT, S. C.

Although often enough disagreeing with P.R., I think it is one of the very few stimulating reviews I have come across since I am in this country.—G. E., NEW YORK CITY.

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P.R. gets better and better. W. R. Rodger's poems gave me an uplift I've not had for many a weary day (reading *New Republic* poetry, etc.) and Philip Rahv on Hawthorne is first rate. Kulturbolschewismus made me shout with glee and think there might be a little ray of hope somewhere—if such fine stuff can still be written and published. More poetry, and articles of the Rahv and Macdonald kind. Your book reviews are mostly first rate, too.—G. C. AULT, WOODSTOCK, N. Y.

BROOKS AND POUND

Sirs:

Is Brooks really a literary pro-Nazi, or isn't he simply a common American phenomenon — the self-educated man whose urge to moralize outstrips his taste and his judgment? Take another specimen of the same type, Ezra Pound, and consider how Brooks and Pound run parallel to, or complement, one another. Neither of them is much good at discursive reasoning, as Brooks proudly admits in *Allston* but as Pound has never recognized in himself. The lists of classics chosen by each neatly complement one another, with hardly more than one case of overlapping. Both writers have worked hard at perfecting a pastiche style: more than a third of the *Canto's* is translation or paraphrase; the fabric of Brooks' New England books is largely paraphrase or quotation without quotation marks. Van Wyck Brooks, one might say, is merely the Ezra Pound of the upper middle class —the chief difference being that Pound, in his time, has composed great verse, but would anyone maintain that Brooks has written great prose?

CHARLES WALLIS

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

No.—EDS.

ON MOUNIER—A LETTER AND REPLY

Dear M. Serge:

During the four years in which I took part in editing *Esprit*, Emmanuel Mounier often spoke of you with the warmest regard. Allow me, then, a short comment on the note you devote to him in PARTISAN REVIEW No. 5.

Since the armistice, Mounier has sought not to "adapt" himself, but rather to fill up a void. He wanted, with such means as were possible, to give some direction in a situation where only empty rhetoric was permitted. As he was accused of "radicalism" when he sought for the human spirit through socialism, so now he is accused of being a "collaborationist" when, as always, he simply works with the materials to hand. Many of his friends thought from the first that any attempt to influence Vichy would not succeed. It seems they were right, for Mounier has just seen the suppression of *Esprit*, an event in which there is clear proof that he had not "collaborated" very effectively. I think that his stature as an honest man emerges greater than ever from this failure. And I think you must agree with me here, and that you will want to correct the impression you gave to the readers of PARTISAN.

C. G. PAULDING

American correspondent of *Esprit*

NEW YORK CITY

Dear M. Paulding:

I have always considered Emmanuel Mounier, leading spirit of the personalist movement and of *Esprit*, to be one of the freest, most courageous and clear-headed of French intellectuals. Nonetheless, *Esprit* last winter put out several issues which contrasted strikingly with those put out before the fall of France—a really distressing attempt at "adaptation." Personalism is a doctrine based on respect for the human individual, and yet this personalist magazine made not the slightest slightest reference to anti-semitism, that outrage against all human values. I'm told that since then *Esprit* has been suppressed, which is to its credit. I know it takes courage to try to survive under certain conditions, and that it is necessary to survive; but if a movement is to emerge from such an experience strengthened (and cured of certain bad illusions) we must state these things clearly. I do so with as much esteem and regard for Emmanuel Mounier as concern for simple accuracy.

MEXICO, D. F. VICTOR SERGE

POETRY ON THE AIR

Sirs:

The near-New York readers of PARTISAN REVIEW may be interested in hearing about a series of modern poetry programs that I'm going to conduct over Station WQXR, every Thursday from 2:30 P.M. to 2:45. The title is "Out of the Ivory Tower," and there will be an interview

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and then readings by a different poet each week. The initial broadcast will be January 8th, with Mark Van Doren as guest. On the 15th, Horace Gregory; the 22nd Muriel Rukeyser, and the 29th, Stephen Vincent Benet. Later on I hope to introduce younger, less established poets.

NEW YORK CITY EVE MERRIAM

EGYPT HEARD FROM

Sirs:

I'm sorry for PARTISAN REVIEW that it had to publish such a sad, dull and boring cretinism as M. James Burnham's theory on what he pompously calls "the managerial revolution." I say that articles like his have no other possible aim than that of justifying in a pseudo-dialectical way the acceptance of "fascist order" regarded as a natural phenomenon if not as a profitable step towards a new social horizon. Besides, a work which has been finely carried on for years by M. de Man now supported by Professor Spinasse, Marcel Déat and other minor traitors.

It seems strange to me that M. Burnham nowhere mentions private property or analyzes its respective situation in Germany and USSR. Private property doesn't interest him. Managers only do. As a matter of fact, his theory lacks details on the nature, the social origins, the frontiers of the managerial class. It makes me think of a new type of holy spirit, the bourgeoisie being the father and the working class the son. It probably floats somewhere between sky and earth, free from every material tie.

The destiny of PARTISAN REVIEW is a funny one indeed. Starting from Marxist sectarism, it develops into non-Marxist eclectism and concludes with anti-Marxist revisionism.

GEORG HENEIN

Aug. 21, 1941
CAIRO, EGYPT

P.S. At least it becomes possible now to laugh at M. Burnham's historical postulates (. . . "the basic explanation of the Nazi-Soviet Pact"). Impudence is sometimes punished.

P.R. continues its mysterious course. See my review of Burnham's book in this issue.—DWIGHT MACDONALD.

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State of New York, County of New York, ss.:

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Nancy G. Macdonald, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Business Manager of the Partisan Review and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Partisan Review, 117 East 10th Street, New York City.

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(Signed) Nancy G. Macdonald, Business Manager.

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